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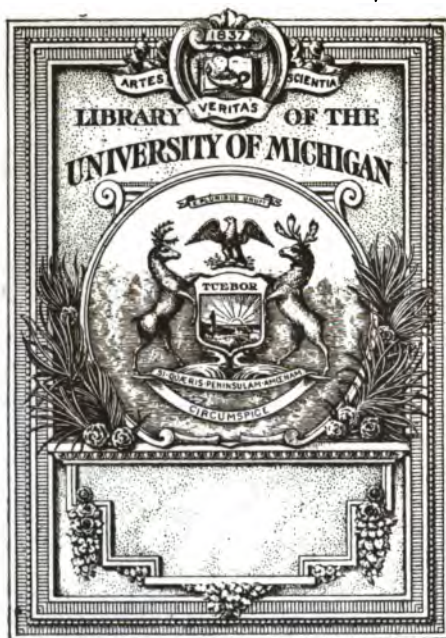
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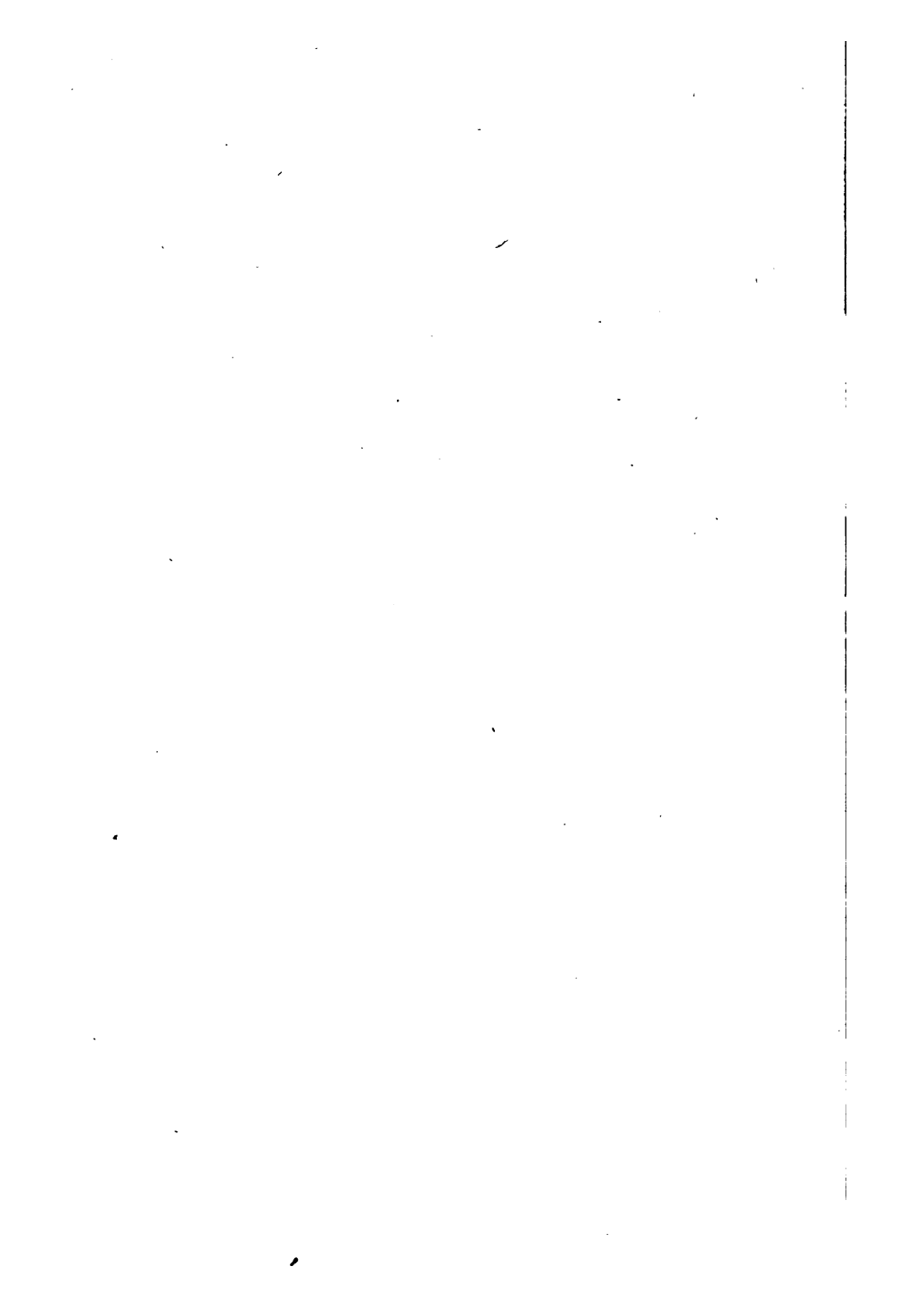
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THIEVES

ca.

1751



“ A thousand times had hope and love encouraged him.”

THIEVES

A NOVEL

BY

AIX

AUTHOR OF "ADVENTURES OF A NICE YOUNG MAN"

"RICHES! ELEGANCE! WHEW! ALL THAT YOU PEOPLE HAVE TO DO IS TO BE BORN, BUT A POOR DEVIL LIKE ME THAT NOBODY EVER HEARD OF HAS TO USE MORE BRAINS JUST TO KEEP SOUL AND BO! TOGETHER THAN HAVE BEEN PUT INTO THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS COUNTRY . . . WE PAST FORTY YEARS."

Le Mariage de Figaro (Adapted).



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1911

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PROLOGUE

"A magnificent house that. Whose is it?"

"Wallowell Severn's, one of our big steel millionaires His summer home. My firm was the agent in picking up the different properties. Yes, sir, magnificent's the word!"

"About a hundred acres, I should suppose."

"Yes. Town house superb, too. You can't count his money. We had to buy a dozen small places to make room for this and tear 'em down."

"Family?"

"Y—yes. Small child by second marriage and a daughter by his first wife—great beauty. Goes in the swell set. I've seen her, not close, of course, when I'm on business with the old man. He's got absolute confidence in my firm."

"What's that little house down there for?"

"That cottage? Why, that belongs to a young lawyer who won't sell out—one of these political economists and theorists, smart fellow but an obstructionist."

"A palace! Well, suppose we drive on."

CHAPTER I

H. WALLOWELL SEVERN was a short, fat man around whose neck, to use the language of Dryden, the double dewlap hung. He had inherited the riches of two old Pittsburgh families, the Hoggatts and the Wallowells, long famous in the manufacture of steel, and he had seen his vast inheritance accumulate without effort on his part every year of his life. Never having had to make concession to anybody, he reached the age of sixty with almost as much obstinacy and ill temper as money, and if millions of people were taxed to support his luxury, he doubted not it was the ordinance of Heaven. Of the intellect and genius of such iron-masters as Frick and Carnegie he had not an iota, for he was one of a numerous class in Pittsburgh, little known to the world, who have silently reveled these thirty years in the hereditary spoils of tariff.

A widower at fifty-five, good Severn had taken to himself a second wife. She was much younger and more elegant in appearance than he, little above thirty, and fully equal to him in selfishness, pride and irritability. There was no love lost between them, as the saying is. The little that he wanted he got, a boy and an aristocratic spouse. She, for her part, considered that in bearing the child she had done him

full duty while making an investment in his fortune by the security of the offspring.

As for the brat himself, a bawling progeny of lust and hate now four years old, he united in his one small person the dispositions of both his parents and was past all endurance with his temper, being able when thwarted in the smallest trifle to emit a yell that would drown the din of perdition. A more unamiable whelp never was heir to riches. However, the house was relieved of him a week at a time twice or thrice a year when, accompanied by a nurse, he was made to sojourn at the country residence of his paternal grandmother. Here, as occasion required, he was trounced in hearty style by the old lady, who both loved and controlled him, and who, it so happened, had him under her roof at the time when this narrative begins.

The only other member of this charming household was Kate Severn, the daughter and sole issue of Severn's first marriage. A handsome, shapely and healthy girl of twenty, she possessed spirit with good sense and a quick temper with ready repentance. She excelled in nearly every out-door sport, in tennis, in riding, driving, swimming, and bowling. She could thrum a lively air on the banjo or be sentimental a few moments on the plaintive guitar, for her voice being by no means poor she could stir the dullest company with a ditty to please. The servants, who adored her nearly one and all, vowed she was more than a match for the stepmother, that she had her grandmother's spirit, and that she was the only person in the house that dared to cross her father. Indeed, the resoluteness of her temper was such that everybody predicted it would be a long siege between the

two if ever they should come to a vital dispute. This last, fortunately, had never occurred, because the young woman loved the fat old father, had been much indulged by him, and had never been compelled to view the whole of the selfish heart within.

Already she had rejected lovers both at home and abroad by the score, declaring that what she wanted was a man, while everything she had met in trousers thus far she could twirl around her fingers. In this there was some truth, her mind being of an exceedingly quick, distinguishing cast, and at school, though she often forgot too soon, the readiness of her apprehension and her curiosity in unusual studies gave her a place above the rest of her schoolmates.

She knew not the value of a dollar, was always in arrears to her allowance, and gave away rich gowns scarce fitted to her figure. But the nature of the girl was too wholesome to be early ruined. Continuous gayety had not impaired her capacity to be serious, nor had the sweetness of her temper been spoilt by indulgence.

Between the stepmother and Kate there arose immediately upon the former's coming into the house irreconcilable differences. At times nothing could exceed the sweetness of these two ladies toward each other, in so much that the seeming pleasure of each in acknowledging the greeting or commonplaces of the other would melt ice itself, but so fearful were they both of putting themselves in this respect to undue strain that they commonly avoided being together more than a few moments at a time. Among the servants this very diverting situation was much discussed. The butler, the head chauffeur, and the step-

mother's French maid took the side of Mrs. Severn, while all the rest, a numerous troop and garrulous, took the side of the daughter. Miss Kate, these agreed, was in the way of her stepmother's boy and had been given good cause to feel so.

CHAPTER II

AT the present juncture a new cause of scullery gossip transpired. Across a narrow lane from the country-house, where the family was now staying, lived in a little dwelling a certain John Richardson, who, at the age of twenty-eight, had risen into no small note with eloquence and learning. These accomplishments, however, he was employing in a cause by no means favored in the great house of Severn. All his best efforts were on the side of the working-men, whom he assiduously encouraged in honest organization, in schemes for the regulation of corporations, and in recommending law-makers to provide by statute just compensation for bodies chopped up or hands burnt off or eyes put out. His own life being upright, nobody could find anything wrong with him except his continuously urging these terrible reforms, at the very mention of which old Severn, his haughty dame and all their friends would turn up their noses in disgust.

To add to her father's indignation with this neighbor was the latter's possessing in fee simple a little plot between Severn's handsome acres and the best view of the river. Old Severn had through agents made offers to purchase this property and was deeply hurt to find that Richardson preferred to keep it, upon which the old millionaire's resolution to get it increased like that described in Horace two thou-

sand years ago. He would even say, good Severn, that he dared not trust himself to express his opinion of a man with a disposition like that.

It naturally fell out that Kate would hear Richardson abused more often than was just, and as the stepmother was both the most frequent and most acid in this contumely, she herself became inclined to take his side, a tendency all the easier to yield to because, as she would see him over the hedge or walking down the lane from the electric car to his gate, he was surely a handsome young man, with a faint expression of melancholy likely to attract her own impetuous and sanguine nature.

Widely different were the two homes of Wallowell Severn and of John Richardson. Only a narrow lane divided them in space, but immeasurably were they separated in luxury. The Severn estate, built upon the demolition of a dozen cottages, upon the plowing of many little gardens and the uprooting of pretty orchards, expanded itself in a hundred acres of velvet lawn. Shady pools and tiny groves, the invention of art, had pleasingly counterfeited the simple charms of nature, nor was there wanting such disorder of shrub and bush and tree as conceals in an artificial landscape the genius of design.

As for the mansion, well might it rival the magnificence of a palace. Though intended only for summer occupation, it spread itself over an acre or more in irregular walls and conflicting sky-lines, which viewed as a whole united grace with strength, while old trees, the survivors of the early denizens of the ground, threw around its windows and verandas delightful shade and softened outline. Few could look at the

place without some degree of envy, and only a philosopher could disdain in it the impression of luxury and the vanity of power.

Across the lane a modest cottage, kept decently painted, peeped through its loving trees at this splendid neighbor. A modest acre furnished some vegetables, a few beds of roses, and a bit of green. It was not fine but pretty, and quite enough for a young lawyer of twenty-eight and a mother much past her prime when neither had rich tastes or experience of finery.

Between the two places and at the end of the lane that divided them was a little summer pagoda that long ago had been the property of a resident whose plot had been purchased by Severn, and back of this wound a path to the river, so that if one desired to take a shady and secluded stroll to the stream from the Severn grounds, it was pleasant to step through the hedge-gate beside the pagoda and walk down the gentle hill outside the enclosure. It was in this short excursion that Kate walking alone one summer evening happened to come upon John for the first time while he was reading on a bench.

Love at first sight may not be common, but all will bear witness that it does occur. She stopped, she gazed, she turned her eyes away, moved on, then stopped and looked again. He, for his part, was inclined to speak, but, hesitating, resumed the page and she immediately went on to the river. Having pitched a pebble or two into the current, the girl was soon ascending the slope with new emotions in her heart, though she could neither recognize nor avow, nor even perhaps be conscious of, its gentle perturbation. She passed him again in a moment, bowed

slightly as a neighbor might, only to receive that sort of smile which, softening the coolness of a very respectful bow, completed in her soul the picture of manly dignity.

That night she could recall no scene but this. How could she hope to meet him? They could be neighbors, they might even be acquaintances, but lovers never. The distance between their fortunes was not more vast than the distance between their friends.

These reflections might discourage hope but they could not extinguish desire. Would he be there again? Most probably, from the same leisure or avocation that had brought him there before. Next night before twilight she saunters again to the path, again discovers the reader, smiles, bows and passes him by. Returning she would speak, yes, say good evening. He doubtless thought her rich, he must not find her proud. She must be fair, be neighborly. "Good evening, Mr. Richardson." "A pleasant one to you, Miss Severn."

A gentleman's voice that, a gentleman's manner! What is it that they complain of in him? Why does her stepmother make gibes at his arguments. Next day she saw his picture in the papers, and was delighted to read half a column of a speech.

By the third night the two exchanged commonplaces on the sky, the sunset and what not, yet he had not the boldness to invite her or she the courage to stop or take a seat. Moreover, company at home would occasionally prevent her walking by herself, and the most she could do was to lead her friends by the spot, both to induce pleasant comment on what she was sure they would pronounce a handsome face and to

protect herself in his eyes as a maiden not seeking this path to fall in with him alone. Thus the affair drifted during several weeks, she keeping it to herself entirely as she hoped, and, it so happened, actually thus far keeping it from her father.

What troubled her most was that from nothing in his manner was it possible to discern whether he thought of her a moment after her back was turned. Youth, however, can hope against coldness, as well as against opposition. Sweet images arose in her breast and pleasant thoughts would not be expelled as she sat dreaming at her window or strolled on the lawn to hear the happy birds warbling across the meadow the vernal note of love.

CHAPTER III

“**I**S Miss Kate’s coffee ready, Mrs. McFadden?”
“It’ll be ready in a minute, Nora, an’ how’s the swate girl this mornin’?”

“Feelin’ fine, God be praised, an’ no thanks to that stepmother of hers, that thinks, I suppose, that none of us can see what’s goin’ on betwixt her and her man Shortridge.”

“Sure, an’ I’d like to have a minute’s chance to spake me mind to that same Mrs. Severn wid her nose in the air, a foolin’ in that disgraceful way wid her husband’s lawyer, an’ her bringin’ in this Frinch chif to cook the dinners, an’ me to git up the breakfast while that frog-eater snores upstairs till noon, me that never saw a plate come back to me kitchen full in a meal of me own cooking.”

“Ye have me sympathy, Mrs. McFadden, and, wid Madam’s Frinch maid an’ an impident butler like this Wattles to spy on us, I’d not be for stayin’ a day longer in the house mesilf if it wasn’t for the darlin’ little lady that’s me own, an’ me eight years in her service. No Frinch maid for her!”

“Sure, she knows white people like us, that wan, an’ ye can’t help lovin’ her, Nora, even whin she’s in wan of her little timpers.”

“Och, she’s over thim in a minit, an’ as swate as honey. I’m not fit, Mrs. McFadden, to stand in her

prinsince. Would ye look at the beautiful bilt she's jist been givin' me?"

"Troth, it's a jewel, ye lucky girl! It's none o' me business, but I can't help askin' if the swate creature's still gitting' a glimpse of—"

"Not above yer brith, Mrs. McFadden. She doesn't drame yit that I've so much as seen a thing mesilf."

"Wull, the Divil'll be to pay if old Severn hears of it, wid his insolence toward the workin' people, an' young Richardson a spakin' his head off for the poor, an' him as cross as a bear, wid that rheumatism kapin' him indoors all the time lately. It's pinchin' him pretty hard, they till me."

"Yis, but it's the most beautiful thing in the world to hear her invintin' excuses, Mrs. McFadden, to be strollin' in a certain direction an' lavin' me behind, an' her not at home to company so much now-a-days, a dramin', the dear thing, an' a gittin' a wee bit swater ivery day. And I caught her sewin' something last night wid her own hands, the first time in her life."

"I know how it is mesilf, Nora. It's an old woman I'll be before I forgit the trimblin' that the first sight of Tim McFadden sint through me. Here's your coffee, child, an' here's that Wattles."

Upon this Nora passed out, greeting with a cool nod the stout butler who, entering with serenity of manner, said:

"Good morning, Mrs. McFadden. Mr. Severn's wantin' 'is coffee."

"Sure, an' I'd a thought you'd be sindin' the second butler instid o' takin' the throuble to come down for it yoursilf."

"Ho, it's not necessary, Mrs. McFadden, to be hironical, neither you nor this himpertinent Nora 'ere, hespecially when Hi feel perfectly kindly to you, Hi'm sure."

"Oh, indade, Mr. Wattles!"

"His the coffee ready, Mrs. McFadden?"

"It'll be riddy whin it's riddy, Mr. Wattles. Now, suppose you run upstairs to till that on me too!"

"His the coffee ready, Mrs. McFadden?"

"Oh, you'll not descind to arguin' wid sarvints like yoursilf, I suppose, but only wid the dukes that you'd have us belave you slept an' ate wid in the ould country."

"You're not disturbin' me in the least, Mrs. McFadden. His the coffee ready?"

"In a minit, I till ye!"

"Hi've tried, Hi may add, to adapt me manners to the changed conditions 'ere. One's got to be democratic with the serving class in a democratic country, Hi suppose—"

"Wull, here's yer coffee! I'd as soon be listenin' to an eight day clock!"

"Thank you, Mrs. McFadden, very much, Hi'm sure."

As the butler went out through one door, a chauffeur came in through another. "Here," he cried, passing on to the servants' hall next to the kitchen, "hurry up my breakfast. I've been up this hour without my coffee. A damned poor house this, anyway. Only four chauffeurs for eight machines!"

"Biddy'll wait on ye in a minit," answered Mrs. McFadden, pointing to a red-headed scullery maid. "Don't be in such a sweat about it."

"All right, sweetheart, but don't fall asleep over it. God! up till two last night. Ham and eggs, Biddy, and the regular stack of cakes."

Here he disappeared into the other room, where he was speedily joined by another young gentleman in the same service.

"Mrs. Severn's just telephoned down that you needn't run over after Shortridge this morning. Coming over in Locksport's car, she says."

"Huh! So he gets here some way, I suppose she's happy. Say, old man, Severn still laid up? Rheumatism?"

"Guess so. She was out till two or three last night again, I suppose?"

"Yep! Regular service now, this Shortridge. Brought 'em here about one."

"He gets out and comes in, as usual?"

"Sure! Just to see she gets upstairs safe, I suppose. Took him an hour to see her up! Then I takes him home toward daylight. Say, Biddy, are you never going to bring that ham and eggs?"

"Seems to me," said the other chauffeur, "as if Shortridge was skatin' on pretty thin ice there, him the attorney at thirty thousand or thereabouts a year. God! If the old man gets his ear to the ground—"

"Well, Shortridge's smooth enough, and so's the Madame! She can fill the old man's face up, I guess, with taffy, so's he'll not see. Understand you near run over this Richardson next door."

"Yes, the damned dynamiter, him and his brother; nearly trimmed their toes off. Wouldn't step out of my way—tried to force me to curve off—not on your life, with me at the wheel! Another coffee, Biddy!

The way this house is run'd make a man sick! Can't you see I'm callin' for more coffee there?"

"Another big strike on, they tell me. Mebbe spread to Severn's."

"Sure! Say, ain't that fellow Locksport a bird! Nearly a thousand strike-breakers in the Western Steel, locked up, by God, can't get out! Want to join the strikers, and can't get a whisper. Tryin' the courts! Hell, the courts ain't noticin' them fellows! I've got no use, myself, for strikers."

"Nor me. Locksport's all right. Gave me a fiver the other day."

"How about Shortridge?"

"Oh, he dropped me one last night, too. Of course, I don't see nothin'."

"Wouldn't be sorry, mebbe, if you just ran over that Richardson or his brother sometime?"

"Ha, ha! no, mebbe not. But, honest now, I'm that kind of a driver, Billy, I'm safest at high speed, say fifty to sixty an hour. People think it's reckless to run that way, but—"

"Oh, they don't know what they're talking about, the average citizen. I'm like you. I'm a nervous driver, nervous till I shove it up to about fifty-five an hour, or thereabouts, which kind of cools a fellow's wits. People ought to understand that."

"Mr. Severn's telephoned down he'll want the French limousine at about one," said Biddy.

"All right, Little Ireland. Guess the old man's rheumatism'll let him crawl to the car to-day."

CHAPTER IV

“’ERE’S your coffee, Mr. Severn. Hi ’ope the dinner last night was served hentirely to your satisfaction.”

“Very well done, Wattles.”

“You’ll excuse my over’earing what you say sometimes, Mr. Severn, at dinner, but Hi thought the remarks you made last night, to the gentlemen from London, respecting the superiority of life hin the hold country, were very ’appily expressed, sir.”

“My friends sometimes find me happy on those occasions, Wattles.”

“Hand if you’ll hexcuse my hadding, sir, your manner was very like the Duke of Portland’s after dinner, sir, has I ’ad the honor to serve him, sir; and what will you be ’eving for breakfast, sir?”

“Let me see! A bit of—oh, of some small thing at ten—the usual breakfast sausage with an egg or two.”

“Very good, sir. And at one o’clock you’ll ’ev?”

“Might bring me a few little duck livers with cheese on toast, with a light Moselle, and after that, my limousine for a drive—the French car.”

“Certainly, sir. Hi hunderstand you’ve no use for the American cars.”

“No. And we’ll have luncheon on the upper veranda here.”

“Very good, sir.” With that, Wattles went out,

and at about the same time, there came in Mrs. Severn, who, bestowing upon her fat spouse a tepid caress, inquired whether the morning found him better.

"Sleep well?"

"No."

"Pain?"

"Of course."

"Queer, its lasting so long."

"I think my gout is a little better," he replied, "but I don't know what's wrong with my stomach. I always take fairly good care of my health. I can't understand what's the matter with Smith, eternally dosing me with worthless pills. No one takes better care of his stomach than I do."

"I don't understand it, myself," she replied. "It's a fair Sunday morning, what are you going to do—drive?"

"Go out about two, I think," he answered. "This morning, I have to meet Locksport and Shortridge about that infernal strike, and the general danger of this damnable situation."

"I thought you said there was no danger of the strike spreading to our mills, and that it wouldn't concern you any more."

"Now, you know well enough, that when there's a strike in one part of town, there's always danger to the other."

"I fully appreciate it. Fortunately, you're under the very best advice. Mr. Shortridge seems always so clear."

"Oh, I guess my own advice is good enough; and Locksport, though he's gotten us into this trouble, is a smart fellow. I don't altogether blame him for

this row, for the way we people who've made this country a success all these years, are treated by the dirty class we've been supporting, is scandalous and villainous. Kate up?"

"I suppose so. Gets up when she pleases."

"Oh, stop this lofty style! Can't you both behave yourselves? I've trouble enough on my hands now, with all these men."

"You know, Wallowell, that I've always done my duty by that girl. If we're not going to get along together, it's her own fault. You know that I'm a young woman, not very much older than she is, and that she takes it hard to have a stepmother in the house; but, just the same, bear me witness, that I have at all times held my temper with that girl."

"Well, what's she done lately to annoy you?"

"I have no complaint to make, Wallowell, about your daughter. The position of a stepmother is not pleasant, so I have nothing to say."

"Then let's drop it."

"I have, haven't I? It's you that's keeping it up."

"It's you!"

"I never say a word about her except for the peace of the house."

"Oh, you give her a dig pretty often—day before yesterday, for instance."

"Do you blame me? Praising that fellow Richardson to your face, when you were irritated because he wouldn't sell out!"

"I believe she did say something favorable about him, but she wasn't praising him. She's got no reason to praise him—never even set eyes on him, I suppose. You're making it too strong. I haven't much

patience with anybody defending such a whelp, but what's the use of making a mountain out of a mole-hill?"

"Do you mean to say you'd let her defend such a man?"

"No! I'd put her out of the house sooner. I simply said she only made some comment in his favor. Here she is now!"

"Good morning, father," said Kate as she entered; "here's a kiss for you. Let me move your chair a bit. More comfortable? Good morning, Mrs. Severn."

"Now here," said old Severn, "what kind of talk is this, calling her 'Mrs. Severn'? Why don't you call her Miriam, or something less stiff?"

"Well, father, you invent a good name and I'll use it. The coffee just right? Another lump of sugar?"

"Now, Kate, I'm not trifling."

"All right, father. Let me fix these pillows. Miriam's propped you up too comfortably." The stepmother colored at this pretty shaft, having of course shown her husband no attention at all.

"I mean what I say," repeated Severn.

"Why, she hasn't even said 'Good morning' to me," said Kate.

"For that matter," replied the lady, "I shan't be at the pains to say 'Good morning' to her at all, unless she begins to show me some respect. On your father's account, I'll keep my temper with you as much as I can."

"Thank you!"

"There's no thanks necessary, I think."

"Well, we needn't say more," Kate answered, "and

for father's sake, we'll have no scene here this morning."

"Oh, stop this!" cried Severn.

"Thank you for sparing my feelings, Miss Kate," replied the stepmother, "and now, if you'll excuse me, Wallowell, I'll attend to matters in the house," saying which, she went out of the room with the greatest dignity and the air of a person considerably injured.

"Why can't you two get on better together?" asked Severn.

"I get on with her. I don't see why she doesn't get along better with me."

"I don't know who's to blame," replied Severn, "but one thing is clear, I'm going to have peace in my house. I want no sour looks from you people. What's wrong with her? She's a good woman, isn't she?"

"She is, so far as I know, sir."

"Now, what do you mean by saying, 'so far as you know'? That's no way to talk."

"Well, then, she is a good woman."

"Now, don't answer me that way, as if you had some doubts about it. You *know* she's a good woman, don't you?"

"She's not good to me."

"That's not the kind of good or bad you were intimating, and as for her being good to you in the other sense, I think she's as good a stepmother as any other. It's not a very pleasant situation to be in."

"Now, I think, father, among other things, that she is always hinting to you disagreeable things about me."

"She is not."

"All right, but I always think she is. And I'll venture to say that she's been talking about me this very morning."

"She has not. She made nothing more than a passing comment upon your having defended this fellow, Richardson. And I wish to say, that as far as that is concerned, I put you in the right light there, entirely."

"So she started that subject, did she?"

"She started no subject at all, I tell you."

"Well, have you any complaints to make about me, father, and the way I act in this house?"

"If I had, I think you'd have heard from me long ago, wouldn't you? You needn't ask me such a question as that. As for this fellow Richardson, so you don't misunderstand me, I'd have nobody under my roof that would dare to defend him. He's an agitator, an anarchist, stirring up trouble with my men, he and his brother, that infernal Tom Richardson, and he persists in refusing to sell his house when he knows I want it and have offered to pay him all it's worth."

"Now, it's none of my business, of course, but, since you mention that, all I ever said, was that it's his own, the house, and it *is*, isn't it?"

"His own, yes! Nobody said it wasn't."

"Well, then?"

"Well, because it's his own, it doesn't follow but I've got a moral right to it. I'm willing to pay what's right. Answer me that, if you can."

"All right, father, just as you say!"

"A poor man's got no moral right to keep a nasty little place right in his neighbor's corner, when the

other man has a beautiful place, and can pay adequately, and then improve the whole thing so it's an ornament to a community. He knows that—just trying to force another bid out of me. He knows that I want his place, and knows very well that I'm afraid to press the matter, and to argue with him because of his position, and the complications arising from his being Assistant Commonwealth Attorney, and from his brother being a leader in the labor unions. He knows well enough that I can't argue with him. And you know that well enough, too, yourself."

Kate looked very uncomfortable, gazing out of the window over a pleasant piece of lawn towards the little house and the river, the view of which was undoubtedly cut off by Richardson's dwelling.

"Now, father, dear," she said in a gentler tone, "I don't wish to be misunderstood. As you know, I'm not always a good girl, but I'm not going to argue with you about all this. Here come Mr. Locksport and Mr. Shortridge up the walk. I suppose they want to see you on business."

"Yes."

"They've just left the auto; I'll go downstairs."

A maid servant entered, and gathered up the dishes, while Wattles appeared, and inquired whether Mr. Locksport and Mr. Shortridge should walk upstairs, or whether Mr. Severn would be pleased to go down to meet them; upon which, the master of the house commanded that they be shown up at once.

CHAPTER V

THE city of Pittsburgh, situated at the junction of two navigable streams that form a longer third, is by nature the seat of manufacture, since it stands at the head of the Eastern branch of the Mississippi and rests on beds of coal. Here Vulcan first fixed his home in the Western world, and, long before the favoring hand of government had been extended, appeared the furnace and the forge.

What Nature herself supplied it was easy by policy to assist. When government, to fill its treasury during war, imposed on steel and iron the duties of import, there ensued in this valley a sudden expansion of these growing arts. That the duties which rendered the imported article dear were to be only temporary, that the country would return to the policy of buying these products where it could buy them cheapest was then acknowledged, but as the terrible length of the Rebellion became apparent, the necessity for the tax was, it grew clear, not speedily to expire. Under the shield of the customs house the mills of Pittsburgh waxed immense. By 1880 they had become a commercial power.

Loud now became the clamor of these manufacturers for a permanent barrier in their favor against the product of Europe. What was originally a tax to aid the government, should become a kind of tax to assist the mills and be called Protection, to support

which argument it was surely plausible to point to the towns that were growing up around the expanding furnaces. The country rather early accepted this argument, because it was always urged as protection not so much to the capitalist as to the workmen. The manufacturer to-day haggled their wages down, to-morrow bawled for subsidy to keep the wages up, the next day required his laborers to vote for the subsidy lest they get no wages at all.

Wider and wider the area of this industry expanding, all Western Pennsylvania and all Ohio became its smoky scene, while the inexhaustible North poured from new beds such quantities of ore, of ore cheaply mined and cheaply hauled, that the profits of the early era were humbled by increasing output and by diminished cost.

By the year 1900 colossal indeed was the spectacle. But what of the laborers? These in early times had been brought from England, which alone afforded then a skilled supply. Invention later making numbers more important than experienced fingers, new fountains of legs and bodies were sought in the heart of Europe, from which quarter a tribe more easily satisfied than the Anglo-Saxon was lured at a smaller wage. The American and the British American workmen were not fair, it was said, a factious swarm insistent on more compensation because their swelling masters were sucking more and more from government.

Palace now rose beside palace while hovel was piled on hovel. Scarce one among the lords of trade came forth to better the condition of his men, to prove that what was loudly claimed before election or on

the floor of Congress was true and that the tariff on steel was benefiting other than the owner of the mills. When the men consulted together they were secretly blacklisted. Their unions, indispensable to progress, were easily broken up by treacherous emissaries fomenting strife, a fertile seed in ignorance. As for savings, these were impossible. The cost of living inevitably increasing was offset by no proportionate gain in the general wage, and in a vast number of classes wages actually declined.

Harder and harder was the load now pressed. Men toiled ten and twelve hours a day and seven days a week in the glare of furnaces, in the crash of terrible machines, and between red-hot ingots of flying steel. Legs were torn off, eyes put out, bodies burned asunder, but not one pension was proposed, not one merciful law enacted, not one favorable ordinance enforced. A pittance was flung, given and accepted to save a lawsuit, a hundred or two for your arms, a trifle more for your eyes or legs.

The small employer may be more liberal than the large, for he that can save ten cents a day on each of ten thousand of men has a fortune to gain by keeping a bite from every mouth. The greed of the great employers became immeasurable. The lower the class that they imported, the more cause in their eyes to despise them, the more cause to be incensed at their murmurings.

At length the magnificence of the lords of this region grew fabulous. Vast fortunes rose every year in such frequency, that to count their number was as difficult as to appreciate the several treasures. One man little known outside Pittsburgh was discovered

on his death to have possessed one hundred millions, but the world was busy gaping at the myriad-headed revenues of Frick and Carnegie. Men were accounted of small means that had only a million and merely comfortable with ten. The lust for riches grew rabid. For gold everything was sacrificed, because in money only was honor to be gained. To get the favor of one of these new princes was itself a prize, nor could any one forget the career of him, who, having met Carnegie to sell him a rug, had struck his fancy and won twenty millions. This fellow, like a thousand others, had so much he knew not what to do with it, tore down a mansion to build a palace, employed a special train to frolic across the continent.

That the humble had now any rights nobody in higher circles dreamed, and among these was Locksport. This creature, having quarrelled with his workmen, imported substitutes from New England or Europe, whom having gotten into his buildings under false accounts of the controversy, he brazenly refused through armed guards to let out. Now and then by habeas corpus a few would be extracted by the men without, but this leakage was as readily refilled, while the newspapers kept the town divided in biased accusations against the original strikers.

Severn, though a stockholder in Locksport's corporation, was not an officer. He was a mere inheritor of riches, consulted only because he possessed them. Poorly trained in the business which he had received from his father at the age of fifty, he had all the unscrupulousness and none of the vigor of his ancestors.

the papers, puts a still greater pressure on Hagan. Maybe he'll be forced."

"He certainly might," added Locksport. "As I was saying, I didn't hear about this fellow being in that place until yesterday afternoon. I hunted up Hagan immediately. Sent one of my lawyers over there to see what the devil it meant. Hagan admits, as I understand it, that it was a bad move, but says he had to do it. Richardson's been growing in notoriety, has a pretty big following, so Hagan just had to take him in. Says, though, he can handle the situation. He thinks this fellow Richardson has considerable political ambition. We can handle him smoothly enough. But he said there was no way of avoiding it. The fellow, having influence, had to be in there if he wished to be."

"Well," said Severn, "I never knew one of these rascals but was agitating for some purpose."

"You see it's this way, Mr. Severn," said Locksport, "this fellow can be handled—"

"Oh, damn handling him!" exclaimed Severn. "Ignore him. I'm tired. Let him go."

"No," replied Locksport, "you can't do that exactly. We have to be a little politic sometimes."

"Why?" inquired Severn. "Haven't we got the mayor, haven't we got the police, haven't we got Hagan? What can a mere deputy do?"

"Supposing, Mr. Severn," answered Shortridge, "there's a row gotten up in the Commonwealth Attorney's office. While everything that Mr. Locksport's doing is exactly right in my opinion and will be sustained by the courts, yet we don't care to have any unnecessary publicity. Some of the papers are

growing restless now. We've got nearly all of them in hand, but they're growing restless again."

"Want more money, I suppose!"

"No, I don't think so, Mr. Severn," replied Shortridge. "They're merely not in a position to suppress everything."

"I've always found it best to fight, stand pat."

"There's great force in what you say—always is, Mr. Severn," resumed Shortridge. "Yet this time you can't afford to ignore the situation."

"Exactly," remarked Locksport.

"My idea, then, Mr. Severn, is just this," answered Shortridge. "Take advantage of the situation this fellow's in about this little land of his. Richardson's been obstinately unreasonable about it. No doubt in the world about that, Mr. Severn. Holding you up. Wants more than the place is worth. Well, suppose we let him have more than it's worth, twice over. Make him a good, big offer, and then let the thing drag along while Mr. Locksport's tiring out the men. Depend upon it, Richardson'll take no fool steps against us with such an offer pending for a month or two while we're examining the title and the like, and that will tide us over."

"Exactly," remarked Locksport.

"And I'm to be bled again, am I? What do I want of my lawyer? Don't I want a lawyer to fight?"

"Yes, Mr. Severn," interposed Locksport, "but there may be a time when it is the wrong time to fight."

"Why didn't some of you tell me, the other day, that the fellow had a mortgage on the place, a mortgage of three or four thousand dollars? Push that!"

"Yes," replied Locksport, "and I've got it practically in my pocket to-day."

"Well, then, foreclose!"

"Oh, he might raise the money, make a great spectacle about oppression. That would make fine reading, you see!"

"Couldn't you assert your legal rights?"

"Undoubtedly, Mr. Severn," said Shortridge, "but as the amount's small, I'm rather inclined to Mr. Locksport's opinion. He might raise the money and make a great hullabaloo."

"His place isn't worth more than the mortgage," answered Severn.

"Oh," exclaimed Locksport, "it's worth about five or six thousand dollars, possibly. But suppose we talk fifteen to twenty thousand dollars to him. That'll fetch him, fetch him down quick."

Severn at last was silent and, walking to the window, looked out across the lawn towards Richardson's place.

"He's taking advantage of me. What right has he? Putting his own valuation on the place! We know what the place is worth."

The other two, however, advised easy methods, until at last it was arranged between them that Shortridge should that afternoon endeavor to call upon Richardson and discuss the matter.

"Yes," replied Locksport, "and the quicker it's done, the better. Labor's terribly unreasonable here. My men are asking another cent an hour to-morrow."

"Another cent!" exclaimed Severn. "Another cent besides the one they asked first?"

"Yes," replied Locksport, "the beasts want two

cents an hour more. Think of it, two cents an hour! They seem to think we're entitled to no profits at all. Only the other day I had to refuse my wife a new automobile, she a sick woman, too. I just had to refuse it. Only have three, but I told her I couldn't afford it. Mr. Severn, I'm ashamed to admit, I couldn't afford it!"

"Well," remarked Severn, "I don't know what this country's coming to, anyway. All we people want is to be let alone."

Shortridge and Locksport now descended the stairs, the latter, a voluble talker, descanting on his successful vigor, until, having reached the lower veranda, they fell in with Mrs. Severn.

"Why, Mrs. Severn, glad to see you!"

"Business all the time—business on Sunday morning," said she, who had apparently awaited them. She extended her hand to Locksport, but her eyes were on the other man all the while.

"Yes, every minute," replied Locksport. "I've got my hands full with this factory full of paid prisoners."

"'Paid prisoners' is good," said Shortridge with a laugh.

"You dreadful men!"

"Well, I've got to go. Where's my car? Oh, there! Well, good luck to you, Shortridge. I'll drop in here to-night on my way home."

"Oh, do!" said Mrs. Severn. "Geor—Mr. Shortridge can stay for dinner. I know Mr. Severn will be impatient for another talk—so dreadfully impatient, tied up here, you know. Good morning. Don't drive so recklessly—Au revoir!"

"He certainly has got his hands full," remarked

Shortridge, as Locksport disappeared in his car, "locking up six hundred strike-breakers who want to quit. Not a soul can get in or out. Got to work, whether or no."

"Well, he pays them, doesn't he?"

"Yes."

"What more do they want? They'd have to be working somewhere else."

"Yes, but—however, that's another matter. I've got to stroll over there and have a chat, if he's at home, with that fellow Richardson, your swell neighbor."

"What do you want with him? It'll only make him more self-important than he is, to find a gentleman like you going out of your way to see him."

"That may be, but business is business."

"Why don't you send for him—make him come to see you?"

"Want to meet him yourself?" asked Shortridge, with a laugh.

"Horrors, no!"

"Then I'll just light this cigar and saunter across the grounds to the enemy's camp. He's sure to be at home Sunday morning."

"Mayn't I go with you to the hedge?" she asked.

"Delighted!"

"Didn't Wallowell ask you to dinner, George?"

"No. Never thought of it, I suppose."

"Neither did you, I'm afraid," said she reproachfully.

"I certainly did, but it's for him to give the invitation."

"Or for me. It's my house, too. Now, don't look uneasy that way, George. Wallowell doesn't suspect

a thing. He knows perfectly well his dignity's entirely safe with a lady like me. That detestable maid of Kate's will probably notice us, as usual, but come on, we'll walk over. Isn't it lovely?"

"That infernal Nora! You know, I really believe she did see us night before last—that time!" he exclaimed.

"Not a bit! of course she was near, but it was too dark. Why in the world are you always worrying about some false alarm or other?"

"Well, let it go. She looked innocent enough next day."

"I hate her! She knows nothing, though, and, of course, there's nothing to know."

"Why don't you make Kate get rid of her?" asked he.

"Leave that to me. It takes time, her father's so easily talked over by her."

"You're looking charming in that gown. New one?"

"Second time."

"Paris?"

"Vienna—but listen!"

By this time they were approaching the hedge near the pagoda.

"Somebody's there. That's Kate's voice," said Mrs. Severn.

wealth, for he was one of those queer people who believe that things can be made better for mankind than they are, and who for some unaccountable reason persist in putting themselves to inconvenience to improve them. The multitude, captivated by his handsome presence, his noble voice and his flow of simple words, proclaimed him in their hearts a future tribune. You had to hear him but a minute to apply the felicitous sentence of Tacitus on real eloquence, when he resembles it to a flame that needs only matter to feed it, motion to excite it, and whose very burning makes it clear. *Urendo clarescit.*

On the same Sunday morning on which these rich neighbors, as we have just been describing them, were engaged in discussing John Richardson and devising plans by which to thwart him, that gentleman had risen early and was sauntering with his mother in the garden.

"So you like these new clothes?" said he.

"Yes, John, and I'm rather pleased to see that you're taking greater interest in your appearance."

"I don't know why, mother, but somehow or other I do feel a little more interest in these things."

The mother smiled as if she knew some other reason, but said nothing.

"My trip abroad increased my desire for neatness."

"I'm so glad you had the money to take that trip."

"Going on foot and stopping at cheap hotels is easy enough."

"You made the conditions in Europe wonderfully clear, John, the other day in that little address. It was so simple and beautiful."

"Oh, you like everything that I say, for that matter, mother."

"Well, it's a great career that's opening before you now. Have you ever thought of marrying, John?"

"I? Oh, no, mother. No inclination, and with poor Tom on my hands—well, it's out of the question."

"Are you still worried about his cough, John?"

"Yes, I am, mother. He's got to go to Colorado, must go, or to Arizona. He hasn't a cent saved, either. But I can handle the thing. Marry? No, mother."

"Dear boy, it's such a load with me too."

"Tut, mother, I've lifted something all my life and can lift more now."

"But it keeps you so hard worked with nothing to show."

"Stop worrying, you dear old goose. Look at Tom's work, with the strike on his hands down there, and the men about him day and night."

"Is there no hope, John, in that strike? Terrible, the way that man Locksport's acting!"

"Yes, a little worse, mother, than anything we've had yet. Simply forces men to go on working for him—yes, terrible."

There was a step in the pathway, where a tall and sickly-looking man appeared before them.

"Hello, John!" said he. "How are you, mother?"

"Oh, it's about you we'd be asking. How are you, Tom, yourself?"

"Pretty well this morning, mother. Cough a bit

now and then, but I don't mind that at all. The Devil himself couldn't kill me. And with all this work on my hands, I feel finer than ever."

They betook themselves to a pleasant seat which commanded a handsome view of the river, and Tom, a fluent talker, began to relate incidents of the strike. He detailed particularly the last situation at Locksport's mill, describing the efforts of the men within to communicate without after they discovered that they had been lied to when they were engaged in New York and Philadelphia. These efforts were defeated by officers acting under unknown authority.

"It's the boldest thing ever attempted in America, and to think of all this—all this woe and starvation to get a cent more an hour!"

"So many people, Tom," said the mother, "don't see why strikers are always specially angry with strike breakers, more angry than with—"

"Oh, mother, a strike is like a battle. Every laboring man that deserts or tries to take a striker's place is like a soldier that says he's got a family to look after at home and leaves the firing line. He's a low deserter, isn't he, family or no family? Now that's our situation. If a strike is just to begin with, every man's got to stand shoulder to shoulder. When one breaks the ranks, why, the rest—well, you know. The meanest part of it is that the deserter or strike breaker gets his wages from the enemy while we fight his battles, and if we win, he gets, of course, the new increase or bettered conditions, too, doesn't he? No matter, though, these men of Locksport's don't want to be strike breakers. They're with us at heart and can't get out."

"And what have you heard," said the mother, "from Tommy Burns's family?"

"I went in there yesterday. The poor things are having a hard time. The children are running around the mother in rags."

"Won't the company pay at least the funeral expenses?"

"No. They say if they paid this claim, they'd have their hands full day and night."

John got up, walked a few steps and then sat down again. "Here," he said, "hand her this, Tom, to-morrow. Here's five dollars for provisions."

"The mortgage on the house here's due soon, isn't it?" asked the mother.

"Yes, to-morrow, but I went to see Edwards at the Mechanics' National. All I have to do is to pay the interest to-morrow. People that loan money on security like this are never in a hurry for it."

"Yes, I'm sure it must be good security, such a place as this," said the mother, "considering that Mr. Severn here would like to buy it."

"I suppose," remarked Tom, "that he'll never be happy, next door here, till he gets this place away from us."

"Well, I didn't accept his eight thousand dollars," said John. "He has the money to buy a place like this, and I suppose he'd like to buy it as he did all the others that were here before he levelled the ground around him."

At this he arose and, seeming restless, walked up and down the porch. "I think," he resumed, "that I'll walk down the lane here toward the river. I want to think over that address for Wednesday, Tom."

"Yes," added Tom, "the boys all want to hear from you on this accident insurance question again. Come back here, Trot," he added to his dog, a short, bull terrier, who seemed inclined to follow John.

They watched him as he walked in the direction of the pagoda. "It's a good thing for him to be alone. He's interrupted a great deal, mother."

"Maybe he has other reasons for being alone than you think."

"What's that, mother?"

She looked away with a slightly foolish expression, and then with some hesitation, said:

"I can't help seeing some things, Tom. There's a young lady next door."

"Next door where?"

"At the Severns', you know."

"Well, I suppose there are plenty of young ladies next door there, mother."

"Yes, but I rather think there's one in particular," answered the mother.

"Yes, but what's that got to do with us?"

"Oh, I don't know," she replied, "but it may have something to do with John."

Tom began to frown. "Mother, you don't mean that John's having any acquaintance with that Severn girl?"

"I don't know what it amounts to."

"Well, mother, I don't like that—I don't like that."

"Don't like what?"

"John's having any acquaintance with Wallowell Severn's daughter. Severn's the enemy of everything connected with us and his daughter'll be the same. If there's any acquaintance, we get the worst

of it. The girl can do nothing but make a fool of people in our class of life."

"Your father was a gentleman, Tom."

"Oh, that's all well enough, mother, but times have changed. We're brought up different. I'm no gentleman myself, just as common as mud, just as common as plain mud, mother."

"Stop talking that way, Tom. And as for John, he'd grace any drawing-room in Christendom."

"Yes, he might grace one of his own, but not any one else's, least of all the drawing-room of a multi-millionaire, mother, that's fighting every principle that John upholds. What have they been doing?"

"Oh, nothing! I've noticed through the trees here that there seems to be a bit of a bowing or chatting this summer down there at the pagoda. That's all. He says not a word to me."

"Well, I thank God if it ends there. Pretty?"

"She seems to be very beautiful," said the mother, "though all I've seen of her is when I get off the electric car, and she shoots by in her automobile, with a glimpse of her now and then as I walk down once in a while myself, to the pagoda."

"Mother, I'm pretty hasty, I guess, and given to shooting off my ideas ahead of time, but I've noticed one thing about people of the Severn class—that in some way they always tie up and defeat people of our class when we set out to accomplish anything. One way or another, that influence of theirs gets after us."

"Oh, that's your way, Tom, of worrying about things that don't happen. You're a nervous man."

"Yes, I'm a nervous man, and that's just the reason that I've held my own in the little course of life I've

marked out for myself. As for John, do you blame me for feeling worried about his future? Can't I see in a minute how a little thing like this might chill him at the wrong time? Just between you and me, mother, the strike's liable to go to Severn's mills because of Severn's backing this fellow Locksport. Now, don't be telling anybody—don't be whispering a word to anybody—I'm telling you this in great confidence."

"What's this got to do with John?"

"It's got this to do with him. In the Commonwealth Attorney's office he'll have a step to take. Now, don't be talking to him about it, for I'm telling you here in confidence, as my own mother, a step to arrest somebody that thinks he's too big to be touched."

At this he paused and was silent for a few moments while he looked intently in the direction in which John had disappeared.

"Yes, I see some—yes, some ladies down there now. Mother, the mere fact of his becoming acquainted with Severn's daughter will injure him with our people, injure me too. Can't you see it?"

"Well, well, Tom, let's talk no more about it," said his mother, a little offended and perceiving small chance for discussion.

"They're moving off now I can see—yes, they're moving off now, just this minute," said Tom, "and let's not talk to John at all about it. Let's pretend we don't know anything about it, unless we hear a little more and then if anything's to be said, mother, I'll have a little talk with him myself."

"There's nothing to talk about, for that matter," answered the mother.

CHAPTER VIII

AS Richardson approached the pagoda he was not without hope that Kate would be there too. Their meetings, which they had thus far persuaded themselves to consider accidental, had generally occurred late in the afternoons, but Sunday morning might furnish a fresh opportunity. He was in no happy mind, for he had been reflecting from the first that this new acquaintance could in the long run do him no good. In vain did he remember what youth and rising fame might do for him and had done for young men before. The interval between classes in this country he knew to be steadily widening, the barrier between his class and hers higher now than ever. Such poor men as married the daughters of millionaires were now-a-days on their social level to begin with.

This beauty, he admitted to himself, had already made him unhappy, and, since such were his feelings from mere acquaintance, what must be the result should he come to know her well? A thousand times had reason bade him stay away from the pagoda. A thousand times had hope and love encouraged him to seek it again.

Accordingly he continued his walk toward the little pavilion, arriving at which he found no one within view. Musing a moment he determined, should she appear, to follow a new plan, through which might be

had something more than a word in passing, and which required only his sauntering from the pagoda toward the river. During this excursion he was confident that, if Kate overtook him, it would not seem improper to accompany her to the shore, or, if it should be on his return that he should fall in with her, they might naturally enough ascend the slope together.

A little ashamed of himself, he peeped over the hedge where a better view could be had of the Severn grounds and soon perceived the subject of his thoughts herself walking with affected uncertainty in his direction. Waiting until she was near he remained concealed by the hedge and then started towards the stream in the veriest pretense of one musing and unconcerned.

Presently there was a step behind him. Affecting not to hear it he turned in the leisurely manner of one finishing a stroll. Kate, in consequence, was in a situation where, if she kept on toward the river, she must all but touch him in passing, or should she now stop simply because she saw him a few paces forward, she must awkwardly betray a previous intention.

Both looked down with foolish faces, but Richardson, the first to recover himself, politely raised his hat without words.

"Good morning," she said, beginning to laugh in a trembling and uncertain fashion.

"I suppose you're taking a walk to the river," he replied. "At least, I hope you are."

"I suppose there's no use of my denying it." Then they both laughed happily.

"Suppose I walk with you, if you'll permit me?"

"Of course," she answered, trying to control a pleas-

ant little tremor. "I suppose you're studying as usual. I see you have a book."

"Well, you might call it studying." He smiled again in a conscious way.

"I've been reading your speeches."

"That's very kind, but you might have been reading something better."

"I think they are very, very interesting."

"I was afraid they would not appear so on the other side of the hedge. To some people my ideas on some subjects are not altogether agreeable."

"Well, you see they haven't offended me, at least."

"I'm very grateful to you indeed, but I'm afraid there are others in your family that don't take quite the same view that you do."

"I—I—" she hesitated, "why, of course, they don't quite understand you."

"Call me an anarchist, I suppose—a dynamiter."

"Oh, no—not exactly."

"Oh, I see!" and then he laughed. "I'm used to that. Doesn't affect me at all. I'm sure that if people look into the thing more, they'll feel that I mean no harm to anybody."

"Why, yes," she replied, "that's what I always tell them. I—I mean, of course, when I have anything to say on the subject, for to be sure your name does come up occasionally."

"It's a long story of misunderstanding," he said.

By this time they had reached the water's edge and, sitting down upon a large stone bench, began to toss pebbles into the stream.

Full of curiosity about his life and its objects, she had him describe to her his studies and ideals, feigning

not to be ignorant of the name of Turgot when he happened to mention, upon her extolling oratory, that after all he would rather be such a man than have the fame of Demosthenes.

"I shan't be a bit offended," Kate said, "if you say what you like. I'm a bit of a convert myself already, you see. I suppose you like very learned girls."

"No, I don't think I do."

They were both very happy, each with difficulty concealing from the other a tender excitement.

"I should think," said she, "you'd feel very proud of yourself to have accomplished so much."

"Much?"

"Yes. I think you've accomplished a great deal."

"A great deal? In what way?"

"Why, I don't know—I think, a great deal, Mr. Richardson—do you care to be rich?"

"I never thought of that."

"It's refreshing to hear somebody say that. What do you call accomplishing something?"

"Doing something that mankind will bless one for."

Indifference to wealth was to a girl in Kate's situation exactly the quality that would most recommend this man. Satiated with luxury, she was attracted by the very novelty of a person who cared nothing about it.

"And I'm very proud of you for that ambition," she said sweetly and then, dropping her eyes, "I suppose you think we're perfectly terrible, across the hedge, with our extravagance?"

"Oh, there's so much extravagance," he answered, "in this town that I could hardly take one person as an object of criticism more than another. Besides, I

don't entirely condemn extravagance. I mean it is a relative sort of term."

"Well, you may condemn me if you wish, Mr. Richardson, for I'm afraid I'm a very extravagant person."

"I don't suppose you ever wear the same gown a dozen times."

"I'm sorry to confess many of my gowns are given away before I've worn them the third time."

"Really?"

"Yes, really. I'm ashamed to say it."

"This is another side of life to me. May I ask how many automobiles you have?"

"Why—why—I declare I don't know. Half a dozen, I think. Wait—let me think! Yes, six or eight."

"You don't even know how many automobiles you have?"

"There! You've begun to censure me, haven't you?"

"Oh, no, I didn't mean it that way—really."

"Well, I don't care. I am extravagant and I know it. And everybody about our house is, I suppose. When I read about the poor sometimes, I am so ashamed of myself! And yet I don't know what to do."

"You don't seem much the worse for extravagance. I'm sure it hasn't hurt you yet. But since you speak of the poor, why haven't you ever thought of trying to do something deliberately for them? Haven't you ever been in the tenement districts?"

"No, I've never been there at all."

"I thought fine ladies made a fad of slumming."

"Don't call me a fine lady!"

"Well, ladies, then."

"They used to do it, but I think they've got tired of it now."

"It's too bad you can't take a trip through there, Miss Severn. I—I really think you'd understand some things better."

"I'm sure I should, but how could I ever go? Terrible places!"

"Get some one to take you."

"Whom?"

"Why, why—oh, there's plenty would take you."

"But who's to take me?" asked she somewhat archly.

"Do you really want to go?"

"Yes, I'd be delighted to go."

"You're quite sure?"

"Yes, absolutely sure."

"And why—why shouldn't I take you there myself?"

"Really? Do you mean it?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"To-morrow, or next day."

"All right—to-morrow be it. To-morrow!"

They were now a trifle excited, for each knew that what was proposed had some risk in it—that it was something improper, considering the inevitable opposition of her father to this acquaintance.

"You probably spend much of your time abroad," he remarked as they began to stroll up the slope homeward. "Do you like European men?"

"No—almost detest them. I like our American men."

"It's a gay life you appear to lead in your set. Are you all happy?"

"If there's anybody happy in our set except débutantes, I never saw them. Everybody's grumbling. The more money the more grumbling. I suppose it's because they haven't anything to work for. If I were a man—"

"Would you like to be a man?"

"Mercy, no! I wouldn't be a man for the world! I was only going to say that if I were, I'd make somebody know I was alive."

"Here we are back at the pagoda," he said.

"Where shall we meet to-morrow, Mr. Richardson?"

"Wherever you say, Miss Severn."

"Let me see! I'll be at Horne's store at about eleven. How would that do—eleven o'clock?"

"Yes, eleven. I'll meet you there exactly at that hour."

"All right—at Horne's principal entrance at eleven."

"Oh, how d'ye do, Miss Kate?" said a voice behind her. The two looked back and saw at a glance Shortridge and Mrs. Severn.

CHAPTER IX

“**I** SUSPECTED this,” whispered Mrs. Severn to Shortridge.

They were all a little embarrassed, nobody knowing just why. Kate, though in a situation which might in the eyes of the others be deemed a trifle improper, was so aglow with enthusiasm for Richardson as to feel for a moment that everybody would be proud to meet him.

“This is Mr. Richardson, Mr. Shortridge,” she said.

“Oh, I know Mr. Richardson very well. Met him in business two or three times.”

“Yes, I’ve had the pleasure, too, Mr. Shortridge.”

By this time she was about to introduce her step-mother, but that lady had withdrawn a step to avoid contamination, whereupon Kate, fearful that Richardson might observe and be hurt by this, declared she must hurry home.

“Why, yes, you two might go back and I’ll have a chat here with Mr. Richardson, now that I’ve fallen in with him,” said Shortridge.

“Of course,” said John.

“Why, yes, it’s purely accidental, too. There’re quite a number of things we might talk over to-day. Going, did you say, Mrs. Severn? Yes, I’ll join you by and bye.”

“Good day, Mr. Richardson,” said Kate.

"Good-by, Miss Severn," and John could not help feeling a great separation.

"You've got a rather comfortable little place here, I think, Mr. Richardson," said Shortridge, looking about him toward the cottage. "Quite comfortable, upon my word! You've been doing very well, haven't you?"

"I might have done much worse."

"Yes, I was taking a stroll here with Mrs. Severn. Haven't seen much of you of late."

"You never did see much of me, Mr. Shortridge, and generally on subjects not altogether agreeable, when I used to be bringing personal injury claims about your office."

"Oh, yes! oh, yes! I remember—when I was more strictly in the legal department. Well, they weren't so disagreeable. We get used to that sort of thing, you know. I want to say, Mr. Richardson, that I always liked the way you handled those claims. Some fellows used to come around as if they had a club in their hands. I want to say that I've frequently spoken of you to men pretty high up."

"Very kind in you, indeed! I supposed you had forgotten me entirely."

"No, sir! no, sir! We never forget the fellows that make an impression on us. It's part of our business, Richardson, to remember the bright fellows when we see them. We mark 'em—find places for them."

John making no remark, Shortridge continued.

"I myself am a sort of a legal adviser with executive functions. Our great companies now-a-days can't get on without that combination. I'm not the whole thing

there yet—not by a long shot—but still I'm getting on pretty well."

"This is a very practical age, undoubtedly."

"Practical! There never was an age so practical, and it's the practical part of this age that's bringing about all the good results. I tell you, Richardson, the fellow who ignores the practical side of modern times is the man who drifts behind."

"He very often does."

"Why, certainly! Now take yourself here. Though, as I say, you've been doing very well, my God, man, you might have been rich already!"

"How?"

"Why, with your talents—you understand. You've got into the wrong channel. You started out with a class that won't do you any good. What good is there in binding a brain like yours up to the fickle and ungrateful proletariats? They'll turn on you, distrust you in a minute. Or what's the good of allying yourself with twaddling old reformers, as they call themselves, like Totten, of the Public Welfare League, arranging goody-good speeches, the way he does. They always fall down. You ought to be getting in with the large interests instead of fighting them."

John said nothing, but let his late acquaintance proceed.

"Have a cigar. Here, this one. As I was saying, business is business. Every man finds it out sooner or later. I found it out myself, found it out before I was twenty-five. I just looked around and I said to myself, 'See here, George, where's the influence in this town? Who puts things through? Who are the

big people?" So the first thing I did was to get right into a large corporation office."

John appearing to listen to all this, Shortridge enlarged on men whom he called sound. All thoughtful young fellows made haste, it was clear, to feather their nests.

"Now look," he continued, "at a career like Small's. He got in with strong interests. Off he went to Congress! A leader now."

"Yes, Small has done very well."

"I should think so, but now a different matter. About your selling this place to Mr. Severn. Approached already?"

"I hope it doesn't annoy him, its being here."

"No, it doesn't annoy him, but he can do so much more with it."

"Certainly. But to be frank, I really don't care to sell."

"Oh, I understand just how you feel. Naturally, you have a little sentiment—of course you have—don't blame you a bit, and we rather reckon on that. Taking that into account, we ought to make an offer in proportion, and I'm in favor of twenty thousand dollars."

"Twenty thousand?"

"Yes, twenty thousand."

"Mr. Shortridge," replied John slowly, "twenty thousand dollars is a great deal of money to me, much more money than I ever expected to have at this time in my life and a great deal more than this place is worth."

"Well, this is good!" exclaimed Shortridge. "Complaining that we're offering too much!"

"Yes, too much! I don't care to compel a man to pay twice what property is worth."

"Why, that's his business if he wants to, isn't it?"

"Yes, and no. It's his business if he wants to give a million, but maybe some people don't care to have other people feel forced to do a certain thing."

"Oh, now, that's not the way to look at it at all."

"Shortridge, I think the offer is liable to misunderstanding between neighbors. I say neighbors, though of course I have no acquaintance with Mr. Severn."

"Glad to see that you and Miss Kate have begun to be neighborly."

"We—why, we've only formed a—I suppose you'd call it a passing-by sort of acquaintance. Now, as to this property, it's only worth about ten thousand dollars. If I conclude to sell at any time, I will sell it to you for ten thousand, unless the market should happen to go up."

"You are a queer one!"

"No. The fact is, the property's not worth more than six or seven thousand except for Mr. Severn's residence being next to it."

Shortridge looked at him two or three times, considerably nonplussed, but soon, affecting to be satisfied with the situation, he lighted another cigar.

"All right," he said, "this will be considered as negotiations pending, as I naturally don't care to go back to Mr. Severn and tell him I haven't accomplished anything. I wanted this morning, besides, to have a chat about matters in general. You're in the Commonwealth Attorney's office now, and of course you'll do your duty there, but I think if you knew a little more about our situation from our own lips, you'd probably

be able to act a little more intelligently. I don't mean to say but you understand the situation thoroughly, but sometimes I feel as if our side never gets a fair hearing in a certain office."

John did not attempt to conceal a smile.

"Why, Shortridge, you know just as well as I do that you people control the executive departments of this city as fully as if you owned them."

"Pshaw!"

"Yes, there's the mayor to begin with. There's the entire police force beyond a question. There's every newspaper in town excepting one."

"Oh, that's the way you fellows always talk, Richardson. I don't mind it a bit, though. Hammer away."

"Thanks for your good nature. I think I'll take advantage of it. This is a good chance to educate capital." He smiled as did Shortridge also with a nod.

"It does seem to me, Mr. Shortridge, as if capital and the public had come pretty near to the parting of the ways."

"See what capital has done for this country."

"See what this country has done for capital."

"Yes, but what more can capital do? The wealth of the United States has been increasing by leaps and bounds—"

"And where has it been going?"

"Who's getting—it's distribution, you mean? Distributed? Why, I should say it's wonderfully distributed. Where I knew of one millionaire ten years ago I know of a dozen now."

"And that's distribution, is it? Excuse my smiling. This means nothing better than that the class on top

has increased. It doesn't mean that the wage-earner or the salaried man has had any gain at all or any gain proportioned to the increased cost of living. Would an English wage-earner, small shop-keeper, or salaried man feel that he was getting his share of the newly created wealth if there were pointed out to him a dozen new dukes created from the great monied class? Hardly."

"What the devil can be done, though?"

"At least lighten the burdens of the multitude—"

"By Socialism?" asked Shortridge.

"Not necessarily. That need not be considered so soon. No. Only by laws already tried and found fair in European countries, an income tax, a parcels post, workingmen's accident compensation. These laws alone would relieve the pressure on the under classes. Individualism—"

—"That means government non-interference in anything, as I understand the term."

"Yes. Individualism has run mad in this country. Individualism, which plausibly boasts of protecting the busy against the encroachments of the idle, and of encouraging energy is, if unrestrained, a curse. It allows the strong to climb upon the weak and the stupid or immoral lucky to prosper at the expense of the unfortunate who may have been brighter and better. It produces, and in both England and the United States has produced, two conditions, enormous wealth and terrible poverty side by side. It's not so in Germany and France. They have neither the one nor the other, and where are there two sounder countries?"

"But in this country while there's some poverty, it doesn't amount to much."

"It does—pardon me. We know now by undisputed statistics that in this, the richest country in the world, eighteen millions of people are either indigent or unable to save a dollar."

"Grant that for argument's sake. Now, I still don't see their grievance."

"First, they want such laws as I have been mentioning and they ought to have had them long ago instead of being called dreamers or anarchists. Second, they are angry at the morals of capital. Our people never grumbled at the size of fortunes until they saw how many were corruptly acquired."

"Oh, there's been some unfair work by rich men, I confess."

"Some! Nearly universal. Our merchant class generally have been sound. But the rest of them! They're individualists indeed! The fraudulent rebates, the cheating at the custom house, the villainous thefts in special tariffs, the swindling of the public in watered railway stocks, and then the awful alliance in cities between the owners of franchises and the criminal classes, the corruption of mayors, the bribing of municipal officers, all these things resulting in colossal fortunes are what embitter the man of humble means. Oh, all this rottenness is the inevitable effect of unbridled individualism. It forces men to be cold-blooded. The state does nothing for the citizen, the citizen contributes nothing to the state. No man is to make a governmental sacrifice for another. On the contrary, he must trample on all who are too weak to resist, for he will be trampled on himself, if he weakens his strength by assisting another."

Shortridge was silent. John continued:

"There! You throw away a freshly lighted cigar, either because it didn't puff well or because you were thinking. It cost, say, twenty-five cents. Why, Mr. Shortridge, I know at least a dozen good and intelligent men who walk a mile or two a day to save five or ten cents and are glad to save just twenty-five cents in twenty-four hours. What does that man think of a capitalist's right to a bonus of, say, millions of dollars for consolidating some railways or manufactures in which he was already a shareholder and which ought to have been consolidated, if at all, for nothing. What, do you suppose, is in his thoughts?"

"Revolution?"

"Or evolution."

"Which?"

"That's for capital to decide."

"Either the angry wave—"

"Or the slowly swelling stream. The evolution to the age of direct or indirect sharing in profits."

"Government ownership?"

"Perhaps, but that is doubtful. Industrial regulation and distribution first."

"Well, Richardson, I hold up my hands. I cry quits. You bowl me out every time," replied Shortridge with guileful good nature. "I can't answer all this, but I'm always willing to hear the other side."

"I beg pardon for making an argument here to a visitor."

"You put it splendidly, old man," said the other, who, long accustomed to public abuse, had never been at the trouble, and to this he owed his success, to make reply, because in the long run indignation was sure to

expire or opposition to be extinguished by a simple cheque. He bade good-day in the pleasantest fashion and, as he departed, said they must have another chat soon again.

CHAPTER X

“**E**NLARGING your circle of acquaintances, apparently,” said Mrs. Severn, as she and Kate moved away from the pagoda toward the Severn house and left Richardson and Shortridge in conversation.

“Yes, getting acquainted with my neighbors,” replied Kate cheerily and cleverly concealing her uneasiness about impending exposure.

“Some people might consider it lowering their standard.”

“I suppose so. Nothing too low for me, though.”

“You needn’t be ironical, Miss Severn. You’ve not told your father about this, I presume.”

“No, I left that to you. I was pretty sure—”

“I never mention your name to him, but you know—”

“Thanks!”

“—that loyalty to him should keep you from acquaintance with one of his enemies, a low—”

“I should think, from your grand point of view, that Mr. Shortridge wouldn’t want to meet Mr. Richardson—”

“Mr. Shortridge had to see him on business.”

“Well, he’ll find a man as bright as himself.”

“I’m sure I don’t know, Miss Severn, as I haven’t had the same opportunity to meet the gentleman that you’ve had. So far as I know, this Richardson of yours is nothing but a penniless, noisy ignoramus.”

"And, for that matter, your Mr. Shortridge is only a hired man."

"Silly little thing! Mr. Shortridge is a lawyer, one of the most carefully selected in the whole state of Pennsylvania. If you had seen anything of the world, you wouldn't talk in that foolish fashion."

"I haven't your years and experience, of course."

"Now you think that's bright! I suppose you'd be very glad if Mr. Shortridge would only notice you."

"Who—Shortridge? I'd be very glad if he'd only stop looking at me."

"Looking at you?"

"Yes, ogling me. He's always giving me looks that I don't care to return."

The other flushed as she looked upon the beautiful girl at her side, but before the conversation could become still more unamiable, Nora appeared and, pointedly ignoring the stepmother, announced to Kate that her luncheon was ready.

"I feel fine," said Kate, "and have a terrible appetite this morning. I can't wait till I get a bite of something." Upon this she disappeared into the house, following Nora and leaving Mrs. Severn in an exceedingly exasperated mind. In her own rooms, where it was served, she ate her luncheon in a variety of thoughts, both uneasy and delightful, while her lively maid was in the humor for talking.

"Sure, Miss Kate, it's none of my business," said she, "but I don't suppose you happened to notice Mr. Shortridge with Mrs. Severn?"

"What do you ask that for, Nora?"

"Oh'm, I suppose it's not for me to talk."

"Well, you seem to want to talk. Now, what about?"

"Oh, nothing, mum."

Kate felt that she ought to resist the inclination of the girl, but her own curiosity was getting the better of her and, seeing that Nora was suffering to speak, she continued:

"What's on your mind?"

"Sure, it's not for the likes of me to talk."

This admitting in one sense of no debate, Kate was disposed to silence when Nora, perceiving her opportunity about to be lost, broke out:

"I suppose Mr. Shortridge has to come here a great deal?"

"Of course he has, Nora. He has business every day with father."

"Oh, I suppose so."

"Now, you know it's so, Nora. What do you mean?"

"Oh, well, mum, there's thim in this world that can have two errands in one house."

"The other errand isn't to see you, is it, Nora?"

"Oh, the good Lord forbid, mum! The saints forbid! I'm not that kind of a girl, Miss Kate. I'm a good girl, Miss Severn."

"Of course you are, Nora! Then what is it you're driving at?"

"It's not for me to mintion names, mum, but I think you left her behind just a minute ago at the door downstairs."

"You foolish girl!" cried Kate. "Of course it's only natural for him to see Mrs. Severn. You mustn't

talk about it any more—not a word now, Nora! I don't wish ever to hear anything of that kind."

"You've only to say a word to me, mum, to shut my mouth as long as you please. But, of course, though I can't speak a thing, I can't help seeing what goes on around me. Not that I'm going to tell what I did see one night, Miss Kate. Not at all, mum. I've not another word to say."

Upon this she slipped out of the room leaving Kate in much curiosity and, when the maid reappeared with a platter full for the table, the mistress was disposed to renew the talk. However, she ate in silence until Nora, after a turn or two around the table, began on another subject. "There's the handsomest gentleman next door, Miss Kate, I ever laid me eyes on," saying which, she eyed her mistress a little cautiously and hopefully and busied herself at the table.

"Yes, I've noticed he is. Very handsome, I think, Nora," replied Kate with some color.

"Oh, mum, the most beautiful man I iver see in me life! And the people here, mum, they all tell me down town he's the most illoquent man that iver opened his mouth. Sure, wan night I was down there, wan Saturday night, and there was a great meeting in the street. I was with Pat O'Donnell, him that ye've heard me spake of before, I suppose, and says I, 'Pat, what's all this crowd for, up here at the corner?' 'Oh,' says he, 'Nora, John Richardson's going to speak to-night.' 'Him that lives up near us, Pat?' says I. 'The same,' says he. 'Then I'd like to hear him,' says I. 'Just follow me,' says he. And with that—will ye have a biscuit, mum, another biscuit?—with that he

pushes me through the crowd till he meets one of the police, a friend of his that's to be made a sergeant next month because of the fine work he did last election, beatin' the Gilhooly crowd away from the polls. And with the officer we kept on a crowdin' an' a crowdin' an' a pushin' the people, an' a threatenin' to club 'em, till we got up to a place where I could listen to ivery word that the man said. Oh, I wish you could hear the honey that flowed from that man's lips, Miss Kate!"

Kate tried to conceal her interest. "Did he really speak so well?"

"Like an angel, mum! Oh, the books that he quotes from, and the big words he can use! Handin' 'em out just as easy, mum, as if he was born wid 'em in his mouth."

"Was there a large crowd, Nora?"

"Yis, mum."

"How did they seem to like it?"

"Oh, wonderful! Sometimes he had 'em cryin', and sometimes he had 'em laughin', and he jist did with 'em as he pleased. Now that's the word, mum, jist as he pleased. And they say that he's honest as gold, and that all the corporations in town have been tryin' to buy him, and can't even reach him. It's a shame, mum, you can't hear him yourself—it'd do ye good to hear a man talk like that. And him livin' so near ye that it seems to me ye ought to be acquainted with him."

The wench knew very well that Kate had already met this man, but she could only angle a little in the hopes of a voluntary revelation.

"Well—well, the fact is, Nora, I have met him casually, as Mr. Richardson once or twice walked down

to the river bank. Yes, he's very nice—very interesting. Now, Nora, you can take these things away."

"Well, that's very fine, mum," replied Nora, as she busied herself with the dishes. "And I'm sure it's very swate and neighborly in ye, indade, mum. I'm sure it doesn't become even the best of us to put on airs."

"Yes, Nora, that's very sensible in you."

"And if poor Mr. Richardson does come of jist common people like me—"

"There, now, hurry up and go off with the dishes."

"It does me heart good to hear ye spake of him so kindly, because me own mother said to me, 'Nora,' says she, 'ye must niver be proud in this world to any wan, no matter how low they may be.'"

"There, now, hurry."

These reflections of the maid, it may be conceded, were not wholly to the taste of her mistress, being, in truth, such as reminded her very forcibly of the worldly objections against this growing love for Richardson. To no purpose, though, did she resist the current of affection. If she told herself that she was surrendering her heart to one whom she dare not invite to her house, she would in an instant recall the tone of his voice, the depth of his glance and the tender firmness of his lips.

The beautiful girl flung herself on a couch while she carelessly surveyed the various objects of that luxury which neither extravagance nor bounty could exhaust. She kicked from her pretty foot an embroidered slipper, while she dropped from her shoulders a delicate fabric of lace. The mere rings on her fingers exceeded in value all that this noble fellow had been able to save

in his struggle against poverty, this man whose talents, she well knew, could secure the favor of the rich but who was willing to champion the poor. The great and powerful, covering his name with abuse, were at the same time scheming for his little home.

These truths were well calculated to increase her ardor. But what was to become of all this sentiment? Was it reciprocated, to begin with? She would have turned cold had she felt the least doubt in that respect. But fortunately for her composure, every word and look of his that she could recall caused her cheeks to redden like a rose. This stimulating her courage, she had yet to contemplate the awful contempt of her father, which she might face under some conditions but not under all. Suppose Richardson or his friends should make matters worse and involve her own family? The strike, she knew, might spread to the Severn mills, Tom Richardson would be at the head and front, and what then would the town have to say of her?

Her more immediate concern was that her step-mother might disclose to her father the discovered acquaintance. Should she herself make it known first by voluntary avowal? Here she hesitated. Not afraid of his temper, she shrank nevertheless from admitting what she might be compelled to avow was weakness.

Not long though did apprehension trouble a spirit like hers. The very thought of unfair opposition roused defiance.

"Let things take care of themselves," said she to herself, as she went down to the library to search in the cyclopedia for the life of Turgot.

CHAPTER XI

EQUALLY unpleasant were the reflections of the stepmother. Her first inclination was to betray without delay to Kate's father the peculiar situation just disclosed, but some other considerations immediately presented themselves. There might be retaliation. She who lived in a glass house must not yet throw stones. That Nora, at least, suspected her relations with Shortridge was quite clear, and these suspicions doubtless had been communicated to Kate, who, if irritated, would probably defend herself by counter-attack.

Her animosity was now intensified by Kate's intimating that she had attracted, however unwillingly, the admiration of Shortridge, nor would her apprehensions down as she remembered that Kate was commonly reckoned one of the handsomest girls in the city. She knew not for which to hate her step-daughter the more,—the having received, or the willingness to spurn, attentions that she deemed good enough for herself. Her final resolution was to await an opportunity favorable to her bad intentions, when, finding Severn vexed with his daughter for some other reason, she would drop a hint and if Kate should make a counter-charge, it might be laid to mere retaliation. She felt she must not, in fine, go too fast, because Severn in the squabbles between the

two women occasionally grew very testy toward his wife.

Most necessary, as a first measure, was it to remove Nora from the house. This wench, once discharged, would not probably be so great a danger as at present under the same roof, where she was liable to be a disagreeable witness at hand. How to bring about her dismissal was the difficulty, since the very attempt might provoke her tongue.

Mrs. Severn's great comfort in delay was that she would probably discover such further indiscretions of Kate with Richardson as would be beyond all defense in the eyes of Severn. It is observable, too, that the lady made no doubt of Kate's taking delight in charging her with indelicate conduct if she should get the opportunity, an expectation which illustrates the saying of Carlyle that our opinions of others are measures not so much of them as of ourselves.

For the present, in short, she resolved to show Kate a great deal of mercy, the quality of mercy in fashionable life being, it is plain, a nice apprehension of reciprocal stab.

By this time she was advised by one of the maids that Mr. Severn would have her take luncheon with him on the upper veranda. She was requested also to invite Shortridge, in case he should have returned.

Just about this time the latter gentleman made his appearance in his usual amiable mood, while he waved his hand to her from the lawn below.

“Tell him to come up to luncheon,” said Severn. “And by the way, where's Kate? Isn't she going to take lunch with us?”

"I believe she's taking lunch in her own rooms," replied the stepmother.

"Did you ask her to take it here?"

"I did not. She knows her own mind."

"Oh, there you go again! How long is this thing going to continue?"

"Until she marries, I suppose."

"Yes, I've just been thinking of that myself. I've been thinking of it for sometime back. Not that I want to lose my daughter, but I want all this infernal rowing stopped in this family."

"It would be just as well, a good thing, if she'd marry."

"Well, there's lots of young fellows about here with plenty of money," resumed Severn, "and if she can't get one with plenty of money, I suppose it's better if she marries some one else, Shortridge, for instance."

"What?"

"Shortridge."

"Marry Shortridge!" exclaimed she.

"Yes. Why not?"

"Oh, he can't bear the sight of her!"

"He can't, can't he? Can't bear the sight of my daughter?"

"No—detests her."

"Well, I like that! A fellow in my pay! Our company pays that fellow between thirty and forty thousand a year, and you tell me here in this house that he despises my daughter. I'd like to know what I pay him for! Huh!"

"Oh, I don't mean that Mr. Shortridge despises

her. I mean he never had any particular liking for her."

"Why didn't you put it that way?"

"I don't know. Of course if you're—she's—she's very young—"

"Well, here's Shortridge now, so we can't talk about it any more. What success did you have with that fellow, Shortridge?"

"Well, only so-so. Had to listen to a long homily on all sorts of political economy and public property. How's that pain in your leg now?"

"Getting a little bit better. Here, Wattles, put that table over there a little more in the shade. Fix this chair better."

At this the butler busied himself, moving Severn's chair to another part of the veranda, and this giving Shortridge an opportunity, he asked Mrs. Severn:

"Have you said anything to him about Kate's being down there?"

"Of course not! I think we'd better not worry him about it just yet."

"Well, it just flashed over my mind that any intimacy that sprang up between her and that fellow would do Richardson more harm than it would her."

"How?"

"With the workmen it would injure him pretty badly and I shan't be surprised if they hear about it."

"You seem to be more anxious to injure him than you do her."

"I don't know why I should do anything to hurt her."

"Oh, no, I don't either. I just noticed it, that's all."

"What did you and that fellow do down there?" asked Severn. "But see here, coming up the drive! Here's Locksport coming back. Who's that with him?"

"It's Small."

"Wants to talk politics, I suppose," said Severn. "Just tell them to come up here while they're about it and have a bite, too."

Mrs. Severn so instructed Wattles, who in turn despatched another servant to the floor below, himself meantime making preparations for the additional two persons. It was only a moment until the other gentlemen appeared.

"I just happened to find Small down town here and brought him up with me," said Locksport. "I started home a little early and thought I'd see you on the way."

"How d'ye do, Mrs. Severn? How d'ye do, Mr. Severn? Haven't seen you in a week," said Small.

"No, I've been laid up with this cursed pain all the time. It seems to me the doctors in this country ought to be able to do something for a man."

"Mrs. Locksport remains well, I hope?" asked Mrs. Severn.

"Oh, yes! All right, all right, thank you, but I have to try the whole medical profession about once or twice a year, it seems to me."

"And now tell us all what that fellow said down there," said Severn to Shortridge.

"Yes, we want to hear," said Locksport.

"Why, it's the most extraordinary story you ever heard in your life. I actually offered the man twenty thousand dollars—about five thousand more than I

intended to offer—and what do you suppose he said? Why, the fellow said he wouldn't sell for twenty thousand dollars, but that if he made up his mind to sell at all, which he doubted, he would sell the place for ten thousand dollars and no more!"

"For God's sake!" exclaimed Locksport.

"What was that? I didn't hear," asked Small, whose hearing was not very acute. The story being repeated to him, he also was lost in wonder.

"First time I ever heard of a man willing to take—" said Locksport.

"The proposition's crooked on its face," Severn interrupted. "A fellow like that—"

"Have to watch a man that makes that kind of an offer," added Locksport.

"What reason, though, did he give for it?" asked Small.

"He said the place was only worth about ten thousand and that if he accepted twenty from Mr. Severn, he would simply be accepting a present. He didn't care, he said, to be put in the position of holding up a neighbor."

"That sounds fine!" exclaimed Severn.

"Doesn't want to be bought, do you hear!" Locksport cried with a laugh.

"Queer!" remarked Small, "though they do say he's a clean man."

"Clean!" cried Severn. "Why, it's the clean men we always have to buy."

At this there was laughter, after which Severn continued: "There's some treacherous trick in this. Men of high standing like us have to be careful with these fellows."

"I should say so!" echoed Shortridge.

"Yes, he's a pretty oily Belial," said Small.

"'Oily Belial' 's good," cried Shortridge.

"What's a Belial?" asked Severn. "Some Italian preparation?"

"What's that? I didn't hear," inquired Small.

"Oh, never mind, Small!" interrupted Shortridge, while Mrs. Severn exclaimed: "Oh, Mr. Small, it's no wonder they admire your speeches in Congress so! That is rather a pretty sounding phrase, isn't it now?"

"He finally said he'd consider the matter, but only on the basis of ten thousand," Shortridge resumed.

"Well, but did you get out of him anything regarding the strike situation?" asked Locksport.

"No, I decided not to touch on that subject yet. He finally said I could consider the other matter as still under consideration."

"I had a telephone while down town," said Locksport, "from my manager, and he says things are just about as they were."

Locksport winked knowingly at Shortridge while he whispered to Mrs. Severn: "There's real danger now of the strike spreading to your mills. A meeting last night, I understand," and then he said aloud:

"You will be amused to hear that there's a threat of all the working classes to draw out their savings from the banks."

"I like that!" exclaimed Severn derisively. "Their savings!"

"Yes, I should like to know what savings they have," echoed Mrs. Severn.

"Thank God, they haven't got any savings!" said Severn. "If an American workman gets a dollar

ahead in the world, nobody can hold him down. He gets a bigger head than the Emperor of Germany."

"We ought to have a standing army in this country," said Locksport. "The police aren't strong enough."

"I think conscriptions would be a good thing in this country," said Severn. "These strikes are fearfully expensive things, Mr. Small, fearfully expensive. Why doesn't Congress take our expenses of fighting strikes into consideration in estimating the cost of production under the tariff?"

"The idea is well worth consideration," replied the statesman.

By this time Locksport had left the table under the pretense of strolling on the veranda and, having made a sign to Shortridge, had drawn that gentleman toward the other end too.

"I didn't know whether to say anything to Severn about the matter," said Locksport, "but things are coming to a crisis. The Commonwealth Attorney's office is going to be applied to to-morrow by the strikers in dead earnest. Hagan says the thing's getting beyond his control."

"When did you see him?"

"Not an hour ago."

"What does he say is probably their move?"

"Oh, it's simple enough, confound it! They're just going to ask him not only to arrest me but Severn too as co-conspirator in false imprisonment."

"Severn, too?"

"Severn, too! I don't want it mentioned to him yet because he gets into such a rage, so cursed stupid he can't see any of the legal dangers, and he might come out with a dangerous roar."

"You're right," Shortridge observed, thoughtfully.

"Well," continued Locksport, "I tried to have Hagan promise that if his office was forced to take some such step as that, they'd let things drag for a week or two after they began proceedings."

"Can't he get Richardson out of town on some business?"

"No, we went over all that," replied Locksport. "The only way is to get him bought off. I was hoping you had done something down there, offering him twice the value of his property."

"I'm afraid not, but there's a queer sort of circumstance to tell you."

"What's that?"

"Why, you can hardly believe your ears when I tell you, but I actually discovered that Kate Severn here is coquetting with this fellow over the back fence, so to speak, down there beyond the hedge."

"What? I don't believe it!"

"I tell you she's been meeting the fellow there. Mrs. Severn and I came upon her to-day, and they were having a very confidential sort of chat, the two of them, right there in that pagoda over the hedge."

"Well, for the Lord's sake! Does the old man know it?"

"No, not a word. You know he's not a bad looking fellow."

"Yes, and a pretty smart one. He knows a good thing, eh? Severn's daughter! It's certainly very funny. Let's see—can't we turn this to account? She can influence him, can't she?"

"I don't know—maybe she wouldn't be willing."

"Oh, yes, for God's sake! The girl would be will-

ing to step in and make the fellow take his hands off to help her father."

"She might. One thing struck me this morning, and that is, that if this striking crowd ever hear of Richardson's being connected with her, it's all day with Mr. Richardson, isn't it?"

"Sure," exclaimed Locksport energetically, "and besides, this thing's got to be used some way or other. If Kate Severn's got any influence with that fellow down there, she's simply got to use it, that's all!"

"Sure! yes! Here's a nice, mild cigar. I rather think you'll like this kind, old man. Just try this one. I get 'em for only sixty cents apiece direct from Havana. Pretty cheap, isn't it? Now, here, I want to add a final word on this business before we go back to the old man. I'm going to have the news spread to-morrow morning that Richardson's in love with this girl. I'll bet you that within twenty-four hours the strikers will have spies around this place. Those fellows don't trust anybody."

"They certainly don't," replied Locksport, "I don't know why, but I never could induce them to believe a word I say, no matter how serious I am. They ought to have confidence in a man like me when I use plain words, and in black and white sometimes, but, damn 'em, they don't! They're a vicious lot."

Sauntering back toward the other end of the veranda, Locksport was in a musing humor. As they reached the table, Severn said:

"Sit down and have a bite."

"Yes, do!" added the lady. "Sit here, Mr. Locksport, and you here, Mr. Shortridge. Have you an appetite, Mr. Severn?"

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“The American system’s good enough for me.”

"I don't exactly know," replied the husband. "Let me see, what did I have for breakfast? Just a sausage or two, wasn't it? I suppose I ought to be hungry. Wattles, there's a fly at the other end of the table. He'll be annoying me in a minute. Brush it away."

They seated themselves upon a terrace that might almost rival Versailles, to wash down their dainty morsels with Rhenish wine, and, while they railed against the lowly who sweltered in the mills, they forgot the vanity of pride in exquisite flavors and delicate perfumes. A cynic indeed would he have been who would have disturbed their repast by asking whether Plutus shall, as in the old comedy, be made on the prayer of some modern Chremylus to see again.

Severn grew mellow as he looked toward the cottage of Richardson.

"The young philosopher's busy down there, I suppose, hatching German statutes for us. I don't feel unkindly to the laboring class. I subscribe fairly to charities and the like. I suppose it's properly expected of us, something at least. But as to anything more, let them look out for themselves. That's what's made our country. The American system's good enough for me."

"What?"

"Twenty thousand."

"That's a terrific sum!" exclaimed the mother.

"I don't like that," said Tom. "What did you say to him?"

"I told him I never could accept twenty thousand, as the place was worth only about ten. I wouldn't have my neighbors paying money to get rid of me."

"Honest talk, John. I wouldn't have my brother put it differently, but, John, I'm not satisfied you ought to remain in this house."

"Tom, don't talk that way!" cried his mother.

"Mother, it's not pleasant to be staying close to people who have no use for you. That's one reason."

"Well, what's the other?"

"We're at swords' points with them. People will talk about everything, and my followers, poor, God-forsaken people, only half educated and most of them ignorant—all of them, I guess, will be suspicious. You know I'd sacrifice my life for you in a minute, John. You know," he continued after a fit of coughing, "there isn't much of this life left. We've all got to die, anyway. Over at the other house they're rich enough to have appendicitis. A poor devil like me can only have old-fashioned consumption."

"Please don't talk that way, Tom," said the mother.

"No, no, Tom," added John.

"Oh, I'm good for some years yet. Don't worry about me. Come here, Trot! Put your head in my lap. Damn these people, I'll give them many a hard fight yet! I was going to say, mother, that if we were away from here, we'd have no neighbors to mourn for, and there's nobody up there to drop one

of their thousand dollar tears for us if we move." Here he glanced cautiously at John, who, however, said nothing.

"What use have we to be living in a neighborhood like this? Here's a man worth forty millions on one side and a little way down the road another worth twenty-five. I suppose they throw diamonds at each other when they're mad. Old Severn's baby got a million to start with. I suppose the old man gave him a tariff too."

This conversation was very little to the taste of John, who changed it to the situation at Locksport's mills, expressing a hope that Tom could continue to keep the crowd from breaches of the peace.

"I hope so, John, though everybody knows that that man Locksport has men hired to raise trouble, and we get the blame in the newspapers till our hearts are sick. There was some college president, though most of them seem to be our friends, who said that the real hero was a strike breaker. Brave! Oh, yes.—He keeps his wages. The real hero's the fellow that can drop his job and go home to a crying wife to tell her they've all got to go hungry till by standing together they can get breathing time in front of the furnaces or a cent or two more an hour to live on, or, if he's a miner, honest weight at the scales or honest inspection for safety. That's the brave man!"

"Well," he continued, "there's one man in your office now that'll do his duty." John said nothing and looked at the river.

"The boys are relying on you, John," to which no reply. "We'll be at your office to-morrow to arrest Locksport. No Hagan for us!"

I'm nothing but a poor, old, half-dying, God-forsaken thing! You'll forgive me, John, won't you?"

"Dear Tom, don't speak of it!"

"And you too, mother, this Sunday morning?"

"God bless you, my dear Tom!"

"No, I'll not stay for lunch. I've got lots of work to-day. I've got to go to three divisions—got to cover fifteen miles to-day. No, John, we get very mad sometimes and make fools of ourselves like me here, but after all we labor leaders mean what's right and we ask no officer of the law to do what's wrong."

"I know it, Tom."

"It's disagreeable for you sometimes," said Tom. "You've got a disagreeable business to do as well as I have—you may have to make trouble for people that you like. This strike's spreading out of Locksport's. To-morrow—well, day after to-morrow or next day maybe it will be at Severn's. Good-by until to-morrow. I'll be out soon, mother."

CHAPTER XIII

IMMEDIATELY after luncheon Kate, receiving word that her father desired her to ride in his limousine, was in apprehension that her stepmother had already put suspicion in his head, but downstairs, as she met him waddling with the aid of Wattles toward the automobile, the old gentleman appeared in an unusually good humor. He wished her, he said, to go with him to grandmother's, for, during the boy's visits there, it was his habit to see him nearly every day.

Grandmother Severn lived in very comfortable style about fifteen miles away, a vigorous old soul who, even at eighty, bade fair to keep her interest in a life estate upon a million for some time to come. It was to pass to the son, Wallowell, with the bulk of the estate which had been left to him outright.

Expecting their visit she met them with the boy, who fell to playing with the father while Kate and the old lady chatted by themselves.

"How are you getting along with Miriam, Kate?"

"Honors are about even between us, I fancy, though sometimes I feel like getting on the housetop and letting the world know what I think of the woman."

"Now, dear, I don't especially fancy Miriam myself, as you know, with all that fashionable affectation and crazy way of running after New York and foreign snobs, but please do keep trying to stand the situation. You're so impetuous, Kate, dear. You were

the worry of your mother from the day you were born. Once you walked a log to outdo some brat of a boy and fell into the river and were nearly drowned. Then you hid some little ragamuffins that the police were after, once, hid them in the barn where they set the place afire with cigarettes. That frightened us all to death."

Kate laughed.

"Yes, dear, but as one grows older and looks back on impetuosity, you find it doesn't pay. You remember, when you were about thirteen, you pulled off a diamond ring and gave it to a beggar woman when you didn't happen to have any money. It did no good. The poor creature was arrested for stealing when she tried to sell it. Then there was that time you rode horseback twenty-five miles in an October rain just to prove to that silly Charlie Ringer that you could stand it."

"Well, I proved it, didn't I? And I laid him up, the little bluffer, for a week afterwards."

"Yes, and yourself with a bad cold for three weeks. Now, Kate, being a good deal like you when I was a girl, I've sympathy with your disposition, but it keeps us all uneasy. Your mother used to have all kinds of fears, used to believe you'd run off some day to be married."

"Run off! What for, I'd like to know! If my father should refuse me his house, I'd have the wedding on the curbstone before his door. What right has any one—"

"To force you into a marriage? No, that's not the question. It's the fear of your forcing yourself through excitement or stubbornness. Marriage!

Why, of course that's the most personal right in the world. I hope nobody will ever try to force you. I don't mean that."

"Well, I should hope not. Are you going, father?"

Severn, having had his shins sufficiently cuffed by his darling's heels and toes, departed with Kate, saying that the boy might remain a few days longer.

As they returned, he decided to call on his sister, who, being on ill terms with his wife, came to see him but seldom. When, having stopped at the lady's house in a less fashionable quarter, they found she was out, he grew into a still better mood, saying, "Your Aunt Emma bores me, but, of course, I've got to drop in and see her once in a while. I'm glad you go over there yourself occasionally. She gets on comfortably enough on that little income of hers. By the way, I suppose you're to get that little legacy soon that your mother left you? Shortridge says pretty soon."

"Yes," replied Kate, "it's three or four months since I was twenty. It seems to me they're pretty slow."

"They always are, those lawyers. It's about fifty thousand, he says, but only about ten in cash. Crazy to spend it?"

"Oh, I always want money, you know."

They talked on other things a while, among them Locksport's affairs.

"Locksport and a gang of his cheated us out of nearly half a million one time in a piece of property," said Severn, musing. "An infernal fraud. We had a lawsuit about it and then he went on the stand and swore some original paper or other was lost. I don't like that kind of perjury."

"What kind?"

"Why, between friends. Now, in law suits between strangers the courts have no right to make a business man tell the truth if it's to give away business policies or if he's fighting rivals. But this perjury of Locksport's—"

"But—but you—he comes to the house."

"Business is business. If we kept objecting to rascals because they cheated us, we wouldn't have anybody to talk with, except such old idiots as Totten and the Public Welfare League."

"But I remember, father, that one time when a head clerk of yours stole ten thousand dollars, you put him in the penitentiary."

"Oh, he was a bookkeeper or something like that."

"But, father! Because Mr. Locksport is—"

"Why, he's slipped in ahead of our people here and got control of the mayor and the police. He's a factor."

"Yes, but you say he stole money!"

"Oh, not like a clerk or a bookkeeper—simply swindled us in a business deal."

A few moments passed in silence.

"What a shame they allow the parks to get filled up this way with all the working classes on Sunday!" said Severn.

"Whose parks are they?"

"Why, they belong to the city, of course, but who pays for them except us people with property? We pay the taxes, don't we? I don't begrudge the people an airing, don't begrudge them a park to stroll in, but there ought to be separate parks for people with

different kinds of equipment. Now just look at that woman with the little boy there a-gaping at us!"

The old gentleman, however, was not in a bad humor, for, when the car had to stop from some interruption or other, he beckoned to a lad, who was looking into the limousine from the curbstone, and handed him a nickel.

"There, now, that will do the little fellow good," observed Severn. "It isn't enough to spoil him. I like to do a little good this way once in a while, when I can do it without encouraging pauperism."

"You always seem to think workmen discontented and envious."

"Well, if they're anything else I never heard of it. We've made 'em, we capitalists, we steel men, we've made 'em in this country, and they're the most spiteful lot that ever appeared on this earth. Do you remember the time the Hudsons had that family dinner?"

"When Mr. Hudson gave the children a million dollars apiece?" asked Kate, referring to an incident which had been much noised about through the United States by the Associated Press.

"Yes. Now, as everybody knows, it was kind of a sacred and solemn evening for old man Hudson that night. He'd made a little matter of ten or twelve millions, not a big fortune, but a snug one, and he'd acquired it by honest conduct, and when he was getting old he thought it would be a nice thing to make the children a handsome present on the anniversary of his marriage, so when they were opening their napkins, they found the cheques and securities there."

"Well, they got them, didn't they?"

"Yes, but I'm sure if that crowd of workmen of his could have grabbed them, they would, the unnatural lot! What did they do that very night just at dinner, but send word up that they were all of them to be out, every one of them out the next day for another cent an hour! They took just that minute, you see, to embitter it—just that minute to spoil the happiest evening of his life. The Hudsons were all sore about it—very sore about it."

"Now," continued the father, "that reminds me of what Shortridge was just telling of a conversation he had with this fellow Richardson down here an hour or two ago."

Kate looked uneasily out of the window, affecting to be interested in everything they flitted by.

"He says that this Richardson was grumbling as usual at what he calls the unequal distribution of wealth. 'Why,' says Shortridge, 'I see nothing unequal about it. The distribution's getting wider and wider every year, and where I knew one man with a million dollars ten years ago, I know twenty with a million now, and what do you think?' says Shortridge. 'He turned on me and laughed and said this was only like having a number of new dukes created over his head.'"

"And what did Mr. Shortridge say by way of answer, father?"

"Oh, I don't know, probably ignored it just as I do with those people. When I was coming over on the *Kaiserin Auguste* not long ago, I was forced into a conversation in the smoking-room with some college professor who began to rant about tariff. He began to give me the usual talk about our selling steel

cheaper in Europe than we do at home—I didn't even answer him. The fellow knew well enough that we do that, not because we want to, but because we have to. We sell it cheaper over there because there's competition. He knew that very well. It isn't because we want to give those fellows over there a present of anything. We're just as good Americans as he is. I didn't even take the trouble to answer the fellow. I wonder how those professors live! What does a man want to be that sort of thing for? But I want to talk to you about something else to-day."

Kate gave a start.

"About going to Europe. I'm getting more tired than ever of this country. A rich man has no rights in America. I'm just going to pack up and be off again to Europe."

"I think the rest will do you good."

"Yes, I always work too hard here." Kate smiled.

"I know it will be an excellent rest for you and—and—Miriam."

"Well, I've practically settled on it. How soon can you be ready?"

"Me?"

"You."

"Oh, you mean to take me, too?"

"Why, you didn't suppose I could leave you behind, did you?"

"Now, father, that's not fair!"

"And why shouldn't you come along?"

"Well, you see, my music here, and—and—and—"

"And what, now?"

"I really don't care to go, father."

"Well, you're going!"

"Hagan's a good man. I owe my place to him, Tom."

"I've nothing to say to any man that tries to assist my brother, but there were influences that he wasn't able to resist. You'll not let him interfere, John?"

"I can't say, Tom. That's official business to be acted on when it comes up."

"Do you mean to say that—that you'll let that fellow defeat us?"

"I didn't say that."

"Do you mean to say you won't do everything in your power to aid us?"

"I said that what concerns official action, Tom, will be dealt with when it comes up."

"Do you mean to say you'll not get after him?"

"I did not say that."

"Then you will, won't you?"

"I'll not say that, either."

"Are you getting too proud, John, to talk to your brother?"

"You know I'm not."

"Then what harm in saying whether you will or will not do a thing in accordance with the law?"

"I don't know yet whether it will be in accordance with the law."

"Do you mean that you'll stand on technicalities?"

"Oh, Tom," said his mother, "don't you see that you're worrying your brother?"

"Don't you see the surly attitude he's taking toward me, mother? Don't you see the unreasonable pride the man's showing to me this minute?"

"Tom, my boy, you're unreasonable. You're a sick man."

"Sick! Are you reminding me of that? Can't I hold an ordinary conversation with you—can't I ask a question without having my poor consumption thrown in my face?"

"Oh, dear! dear!" cried the mother. "And this on a Sunday morning."

"Go on, Tom," said John. "Say what you please."

"Oh, I'll have no pity, no charity in your tone at all, John, to me. Although I've helped to make you, I'd do it over again. I worked for you day and night. And now, if you like anybody better than the rest of us poor devils, say so! Oh, when I think of the hunger and starvation of ten thousand families in town this day, fighting for their poor little cent an hour, fighting to get half an hour's rest a day—"

Just here he fell into a terrible fit of coughing and though he at first disdained their assistance, he was at length compelled to accept it, and was led into the house. The telephone rang.

"It's for you, John," said the mother, who had answered it.

"Here, put your arm around him, mother, while I go to the 'phone."

After a few moments John returned to their side.

"I heard you mention Hagan's name," said Tom half surlily.

"Yes, he says he's going out of town for a few days."

"I know the man. He's dodging us. Well, it's up to you, John—up to you! He knew what was coming. He thinks you'll not dare to do it and him away—it's up to you. No, I'll not say too much, mother. I've been a bad fellow to-day—I've lost my temper—

"Next week, with his 'ittle girl."

She leaned against him in silence while the machine sped rapidly on, until they arrived again at the Severn grounds, where, as they began to alight from the car, he added, "Next week, remember!"

CHAPTER XIV

AFTER this unpleasant conversation with her father, Kate, as may be imagined, had need of reflection. It was a great relief to her that she was able to avoid him, for, her stepmother being absent on some engagement and the old gentleman being seized with a return of his rheumatism in an extremely acute degree, their dining together or having conversation appeared quite unnecessary. All she saw of him further was at his door, where she went to say good night.

Agreeably to the turn of human nature, her first suggestion was that this trip to Europe was an idea of her stepmother's, invented for no other purpose than to send her abroad while Mrs. Severn would remain there as little as possible disturbed in that flirtation with Charles Shortridge, a relation indeed which Kate could not fairly yet acknowledge even to herself, but which she was not able to put altogether out of her mind. However, she was disposed to confess it a very improbable circumstance that her stepmother had suggested the voyage because, in the event of their going abroad, it was almost certain that this lady herself would have to go too. Was it possible, then, that her father, having heard of this acquaintance with Richardson, had resolved on the journey himself to take her out of town?

This, also, appeared altogether impossible, for if

even a breath of that acquaintance had come to the ears of her father, he would certainly be by this time in an uncontrollable rage. Diplomacy was no part of his character, the less so in this instance as nothing could more completely outrage every prejudice that he had had from birth than her forming the least degree of friendship for people connected with his workmen. Such an intimacy he would, in fact, regard pretty much as a Southern planter would look upon his daughter's coquetting with a negro. From his own father he had imbibed most violent prejudices against the laboring class, nor from infancy could she recall anything more bitter than his denunciation of what he called their lawless and unfair methods and their intention to get what belonged to him. Their ignorance and their very poverty were matters of contempt in his eyes. It was accordingly as clear as anything could be that, if the least breath of her acquaintance with Richardson had been communicated to him, the house would by this time be in turmoil.

These thoughts she meditated with considerable feeling, not omitting from time to time to take a glance from her window in the direction of the cottage in which, as night drew on, a light could be seen from one of the windows. About its interior she had as much curiosity as a beggar to see the inside of a palace. Entirely captured by her love she had not made, like Richardson, any effort to restrain it, for when had her nature ever been taught to deny itself anything? Though indulgence had not spoiled, discipline had not regulated her character, and she had yet to experience either deep self-denial or acute disappointment.

Her natural temper, therefore, inclined her to resist

what was disagreeable. This journey to Europe, it was clear, could be avoided if she were ready to make a desperate stand against it, and so long as her father was not suspicious of her motive in remaining at home, she felt sanguine that she could carry her point against him. Let him be off to Europe, then, with her step-mother, and what immeasurable happiness would be hers! Under the chaperonage of an aunt, she would have the mansion practically to herself and, let the worst come of it, there would be one who would be sure to enter. The more she thought of this, the more she was pleased with it. Nothing, in point of fact, could appear more sensible and more reasonable. Ignoring the injunctions that her father had already given her to make ready, she would say nothing more on the subject until he himself should bring it up, upon which disagreeable event she would call out her strongest forces to meet the enemy. The only thing that troubled her was that her stepmother might in the meantime drop an inkling in his ear of what was persuading her to remain at home.

She now gave herself up to thoughts of the pleasant expedition she would make to-morrow by the side of that noble fellow of whom the very recollection brought blushes to her face, and these delightful thoughts imparted at last contentment to her heart and to her mind repose.

flogging from one of 'is men, which Hi assure you settled it very quickly. Hi believe this is your mistress's breakfast, so Hi'll not be detainin' you."

"No, nor it wouldn't be safe for the likes o' you to be detainin' me this mornin', Mr. Wattles. What your opinion is of me, sir, I nayther know nor care. But me own's jist the same of you."

With this Nora betook herself upstairs bearing the breakfast, for it was now half-past eight and her mistress had called for it.

It is sometimes a peculiarity of morning to give to the reflections of the night before a rather dubious cast, and Kate, now that she was about to pass the forenoon with a man against whom her father must have the most determined hostility, found it necessary to fortify her mind. She had been prepared for some time to make reasonable excuses if confronted by his reproaches regarding the mere conversations in the pagoda, an event undoubtedly irritating to him when revealed, but such as could be overlooked after a passing outburst of ill humor. This excursion about town was, however, of a different sort, and if that also should become known, she must face the greatest rage that she had probably ever seen in her parent and probably his enduring resentment.

But she was not wanting in sources of courage. What sort of character had this father displayed in their ride the day before? What example had he been setting her of moral and upright conduct, this father who could tell of hounding a poor offender into prison, while he would not refuse to take to his very table a man whom he charged with robbing him? What maxims of high and honorable conduct had she ever

heard from his lips? What had she ever heard from him except worldly pretense and schemes of social and business advancement?

Reasoning in this way, she began to wonder how her father came by so much virtue that he should be in a position to denounce a good man like Richardson and to be in a fury with her if she had anything to do with such a person. As for her stepmother, let her betray if she would so innocent an acquaintance. Let her tell Severn this harmless story, harmless to any one but Severn himself, and perhaps she, Kate, might retaliate in kind, a disagreeable result, which she did not willingly plan to bring about, but one which at any rate she was privileged to use in her course of self-defense. This last reflection, however, gave her no happiness. She was yet too fond of her father to suggest anything that could make him unhappy with his wife; and since, being a pure-minded girl, she could not believe that there was anything serious in the possible flirtation between her stepmother and Shortridge and could not, in fact, bring herself to believe that it even amounted to a flirtation, she finally concluded it would be more womanly in her to keep her peace on this somewhat dangerous topic.

Another and peculiar source of embarrassment to her was her future relations with Richardson himself, whom she could not invite to her house, and yet to whom she owed in that respect some explanation. He would not, perhaps, ask the privilege of visiting her home, but he might well expect an invitation.

These things, though, did not long trouble her mind, which rose rapidly to the spirit of the occasion; so

after her coffee, she ordered without delay her automobile.

It was somewhat earlier than his fair neighbor that John Richardson also arose that Monday morning, nor was he less troubled than she with doubts about the curious and delightful acquaintance into which he was drifting. Dressing more slowly than usual, he would from time to time cast a glance across the hedge in the hope that he might see a certain fair figure moving on the lawn. Then he came down to his porch to seek the morning newspaper while his mother bestirred herself with the servant to prepare his breakfast.

The first thing that caught his eye in the newspaper was something relating to himself, for what should he behold in a prominent column but the words in black letters, "Will Probably Move to Town"; and then, "Young Statesman selling out to Neighbor Severn," after which followed the usual newspaper account of negotiations between the popular leader and the rich aristocrat. This bit of news, having no truth in it to begin with beyond the bare facts that have already been narrated, struck him at once as something which even the curious public would not have much interest in and which had probably been communicated for a purpose. His brother Tom indeed might possibly have mentioned it, but this he regarded as improbable. If, as Saint Augustine confessed, the daily furnace in which we are to be tried is the tongue of men, what must the poor old martyr have thought of modern journalism?

"You don't seem quite so happy as you used to be, John," said the mother, as they sat down to the meal;

"or rather, you seem to be very happy some hours and then again very down in your spirits."

"Well, with all this trouble of Tom's sickness on my mind, mother, you can see that I've reason to be worried."

"Yes," replied she, "and if we could only get him to Colorado—"

"I've been thinking of it, mother, again and again, ever since we first talked it over, and I'm afraid it's a large bit of expense; still, it can be done."

"I'm afraid he wouldn't go at the last minute, John."

"Yes, I think we could get him there if I'd go with him for awhile; then he might stay."

"God knows if he doesn't I don't know what will become of him!"

"If he doesn't, I'm afraid, mother, we do know what will become of him!"

"Yes, yes, but I've such hopes, John, of that climate out there."

"Dr. MacGregor said that he was not too far gone, mother, and there's only one thing for us to do—we've got to send him there, got to take him there if necessary, got to sell this house if we can't do anything else."

The poor woman looked unhappily around the walls and out into the garden.

"But," continued John, "I don't think that will be necessary, mother."

"I'm afraid, John, we've been living a bit extravagantly of late."

"Perhaps I have, mother. That new dress suit of mine could have been put off for awhile, I'm afraid."

"No, not you, John. It's here in the house; we've

been living more extravagantly on the table than we used to do. Chicken twice last week, John, and there's no need of that."

"Oh, that doesn't amount to much."

"Well, all these little things count, John."

"Maybe so, maybe so, but I don't think they amount to much."

"And I really think, John, I could do this little work here in the house myself, with the aid of old Tim around the garden to do the chores."

"Hold on, mother! Not that!"

"Well, but it's my duty, John, when we're trying to save the boy; and the price of everything has gone up so. Meat is so much dearer, every kind of food is dearer. I was hoping that this new place you're in would make things much easier, but I see there's a lot of expenses about it for the present, especially now when there's a political fight on."

There was silence for a moment, after which she continued:

"What mountains of money they must have next door to support all that magnificence. Sometimes I wonder where it all comes from."

"You might add, 'whom it all comes from,' " he observed with a smile, and then coloring slightly he arose saying, "It's time to be off to town, mother, so here's good-by."

CHAPTER XVI

SOME adventures in life are never forgotten, though we live to the age of Methuselah, and this surely was such to Kate Severn. Arriving at Horne's before the appointed hour, she busied herself buying things that she did not want and pretending to examine things she never had cared for, her heart all the time beating rapidly and the accustomed color on her cheek being very much deepened. In fact, she could not avoid looking around from time to time as if somebody must be watching her, and when one of her friends, also shopping, happened to fall in with her, she gave more excuses in a moment for separating from her than she could have explained in a week.

It was eleven at last. She went to the principal portal and grew rosy red, for there stood Richardson.

"I've been waiting here, I think, four or five minutes."

"You know, I was busy inside. I had a number of things to attend to."

"Oh, no trouble to wait! You haven't repented of your little enterprise?"

"Not a bit. I've dismissed my automobile. A long walk?"

"I didn't know that you'd care to walk."

"Better try me and see," she cried.

"All right. This is not too fast, is it?"

"Oh, no. I'm rather athletic, you know."

"Yes, I've noticed that."

"Noticed it? Where?"

"I used to see you early in the summer before we got acquainted—used to see you on the lawn over in the tennis-court."

"In the tennis-court? Could you see so well from your house?"

"Yes. It's over at the other side of your place, of course, pretty far away, but still I see it."

"How funny! And I didn't see you!"

"Yes, and I used to see you practicing archery."

"In my archery costume, too? I suppose I looked horrid in that."

"I thought it very becoming, Miss Severn."

"Of course you have to say that. It seems queer, you know, after you've become acquainted with a person to find they've been knowing you for sometime when you weren't aware of it. How well our steps go together, don't they?"

"Yes."

"You know some people have the greatest difficulty walking together, Mr. Richardson."

"Yes, and such a fine day for walking. Cloudy."

"Cloudy? Somehow I didn't notice that it's cloudy. It seemed perfectly clear. By the way, where is your room in your—your cottage?"

"Well, I'm not sorry to say it's on the side next to your house."

"How pleasant! My room's on your side, too, you know, right over the lawn towards the hedge. Such a wide lawn, isn't it?"

"It's a little too wide sometimes, I think," he said,

and then he colored, while she looked away herself in a little embarrassment.

"You know," she resumed, "I'm—I'm so pleased that you've taken Turgot as a sort of model, or at least have made his life something of an object in your own. I always was so fond of his life," and this she remarked with as much ease as if she had had the life of Turgot in her lap from childhood.

"Oh, mercy!" she exclaimed, before he could reply, "I've dropped my purse. Thank you for picking it up. I don't like to lose two thousand dollars."

"Two thousand dollars! Do you carry any such sum?"

"Oh, dear, no! That's the purse itself, you know."

"What?"

"The purse. That's what it cost. It does seem terrible, doesn't it!"

"Two thousand dollars for a purse, Miss Severn?"

"Why, yes! Some of the girls have them that cost three thousand dollars."

John, looking at her in wonder, reflected that there had indeed arisen in this country a class of whom the multitude in one sense know nothing and whose magnificence is beyond estimate. They were soon in the poor quarter.

"Mercy, what a street!" exclaimed Kate.

"There are plenty worse."

"And what do they do with their wages that they live this way?"

"They can't save. Rents even here are high. A vile street this!"

They had reached a quarter more filthy than any be-

fore. Ragged urchins and idle women stared at them from the doors and windows of vile wooden houses. The street, filthy and disordered, sent up disgusting smells.

"The city officials care nothing for streets like these," John observed.

This was a very unfortunate time to make this remark, for, just as he uttered it, her eye happened to look upon a lamp post, upon which was hung in very dirty letters, "Severn's Row." Kate fell to blushing furiously. She was convinced, though, that he had not led her to the place by design, the more so as he now stopped to ask a woman what the direction was to a certain street beyond, and this engaging them in some talk with the creature, Kate began to ask her questions.

"How did your little girl lose her hand?"

"Oh, a helpin' one of the boys at the scrap-heap a loadin' the stuff into one of them cars."

"And what caused her to lose her hand?"

"It was blood poisoning," said the little girl herself, at the same time hiding her arm behind her back.

"So the doctor said that amputated her," added the mother. "It was lucky, he said, she didn't lose her whole arm, and maybe I'd have lost me child entirely if we'd lost another day."

"And your husband?" inquired Kate.

"Och, don't be askin' me."

"You've lost him?"

"Blind."

"Blind?"

"Stone blind, and me workin' me poor old hands off to support him. But he's not gone to the poorhouse

yet and, God please me, he'll not go there as long as me head's hot."

"And didn't the mill give you anything?"

"Oh, I suppose they were fair enough," responded the woman, "fair enough accordin' to their notions, mum. We got two hundred and fifty dollars, bein' fifty higher than my lawyer told me'd ever been given before in a case like that. Sure, it's a beautiful swate-heart ye have, sir!"

Kate blushed scarlet.

"There's the old man now a-sittin' there, a-sittin' at the door—you see him inside, just inside the door. Now here, run away, you little Mulligan boys, and you, Casey, stop a-starin' at the lady that way. Run on with ye!"

"Can I give her anything?" Kate whispered to Richardson.

"You might hand it to the little girl."

The child stared in wonder when she found in her hand a whole dollar, looking meanwhile at Kate as if she beheld an angel.

"Sure, mum, you're straight from Heaven itself!" exclaimed the mother. "God knows I had a dream last night. 'Dan,' says I, 'we'll be hungry again to-day.'"

"And what," inquired Richardson, "what was your husband's occupation?"

"What did he do in the mills, the old man? Sure, and he worked at the open hearth, one of the best men in the service at that. None of them could beat my Danny. Sure, ye're very kind. I hope ye can see, mum, that we've seen better days than these—and God knows I never expected to be livin' in Severn's Row."

"Come," said John, "suppose we move on, Miss Severn," adding her name, however, under his breath so that it was not heard by the woman, while as they moved away he added, "I really did not know, Miss Severn, that we were in a street that bore your family name. Most of the names of these streets are unknown. I feel very guilty about it."

"You needn't," answered Kate, "for if father has property and working people like this, I'm very grateful to you for letting me know it. It's terrible!"

The girl was serious now. "Why don't they have to provide for these injured people?"

"They do in every civilized country under the sun except ours. Here the poor workman must go to law to prove that he wasn't at fault. A lawsuit's a lawsuit. The poor can't wait."

"It's a wicked law, then. You don't know what it is to have the tremendous luxury of one's own life suddenly brought before one in this way. Why, it's awful!"

Thus they strolled on, the girl exulting in his company and taking through the mere influence of love every opinion that he uttered, for natures impetuous and ardent when they yield at all, commonly make a complete surrender. The queer denizens of the street gazed at them sometimes in silence and sometimes with contempt, adding from time to time through the mouth of a jealous or impudent boy a jeering compliment to the lady's finery. But nothing could exceed the good nature of Kate or the interest that she took in everything around her. At last they decided to return and in a street car.

"It's very droll in here, isn't it?" said Kate.

"Just like any other car."

"I suppose so. But the fact is, I haven't been in a street car since I was a child."

"What! It seems as if one had to use street cars."

"No, not if you have half a dozen or eight automobiles. I've heard my stepmother boast that her child should never set foot in a street car. Who was that man that just spoke to you, Mr. Richardson?"

"The one that just went out? A man named Dickson, a labor leader."

"He gave me a very intent look," said Kate. Then they fell to laughing at they knew not what, neither of them willing to lose a moment of the pleasure that even this ride was affording or stopping to think how much longer all this pleasant company could be possible, and when at last they parted down town it was agreed that he should meet her the next day. She was to have, she said, a company of friends on the lawn in the afternoon and after the ladies' departure she would not go back to the house till six o'clock. Promising to be there, he gave her a look which but poorly concealed the feelings within him, nor was it ill exchanged for the fond, the lingering glance which she gave him in return.

Kate now hurried home, happy indeed, but not without a feeling that she had crossed the Rubicon.

CHAPTER XVII

RICHARDSON having gotten a few bites of luncheon hurried to his office from which he had been absent since ten. A happy man, he was approaching the door and glad to pat on the head little Eddie Jones, who was on duty in the outer hall.

"Limping to-day, Eddie? What's wrong?"

"Oh, yesterday being Sunday, me an' some of the boys went in swimmin' and a lot of them South Side kids they tried to run off wit our cloes and Hennie Meyers and me—"

"Just chased them in your bare feet—"

"Sure, what else or go home naked, and I tore a hole in me foot with a nail and it kep' me awake mos' the night and—"

"And you fell asleep with a piece of wood between your teeth for fear of lockjaw, eh?" The boy looked foolish.

"I was readin' about lockjaw the other day in the *Gazette's* Sunday Magazine—"

"Here's a dime, Eddie. You'll have no lockjaw. Mr. Simmons or Mr. Jones back yet from luncheon?"

"Yes, sir—in now."

The Commonwealth Attorney's office that morning was in the state of confusion in which we usually find municipal offices in America. In the main hall sat a number of poorly dressed people come from the ranks of poverty and vice. Now and then a clerk

would pass in a languid manner to find another clerk with whose neglect of something he could find fault. Through doors ajar you could see learned gentlemen with their feet on desks or chairs, smoking wisely beside disordered tables and, as from time to time some visitor made inquiry, you felt at once that his coming was taken in ill part, and that he ought to know better than to trouble the underpaid servants of the public.

"Mr. Jones," said Eddie, entering one of the inner rooms, "here's a woman out here won't go till she sees you. Can't put her off."

"What does she want?"

"Says her husband beats the face off her every night. Wants him arrested."

"Didn't I tell you not to bother me with things like that?"

"Can't help it, Mr. Jones—says she'll stay here."

"Well, she'll not. I'll have her thrown out if she talks that way in this office. Don't you know enough to take her to Mr. Johnson? He takes care of cases like that. Get out and stop bothering me. Oh, how d'ye do, Simmons?" One of his associates had entered the room.

"What about that Dago murder case to-morrow?" asked Simmons.

"Don't ask me."

"Well, I'm not to try it, am I?"

"Get it put off."

"It's been put off half a dozen times," answered Simmons. "Defendant says he'll move for dismissal now. Been in jeopardy too long. Court'll probably dismiss it, too."

"Know anything about any of the witnesses?"

"No. Why should I? Does this office expect me to attend to everything?"

At this moment a policeman entered, insisting upon a moment's interview and explaining that he held two Chinamen who had been caught gambling and whom he would take back to jail if the prosecutors so advised. Permitted to bring them in, he described the situation in which they were discovered, narrating with various honest oaths that they had been nabbed in a bakery with much appearance of guilt, though without any of the implements of gambling.

"What were you doing there?" asked Simmons of one of the Chinamen.

"Me make noodles."

"Huh! And what were you doing, little Pigtail?" he asked of the other.

"Me eat noodles."

"Liars, both of you on the face of it," observed Simmons.

"Off with them both," added Jones. "We've got to stop gambling in this town. The newspapers are demanding it. Just take 'em off and lock 'em up again," upon which injunction the officer disappeared with his captives while Simmons added: "This town can't stand that sort of thing. What is it, Johnson?"

Mr. Johnson, one of the junior prosecutors, now announced that Tony Maguire of the first ward was complaining that his games had been meddled with lately by the police.

"Tony," continued Johnson, "supported this office last campaign down the line and wants to know what this means."

"Say, that won't do!" exclaimed Jones. "You just

let him know at once, Johnson, that we'll attend to that. Tony's all right."

"Well, what about this Dago murder case, I say?" asked Simmons.

"Let's make the great orator try it," answered Jones.

"Great orator! I wish I were as wise as that fellow looks! Give me a cigarette."

"The way that fellow Richardson hypnotizes this town makes me tired. But just wait a minute—here he is. Been out to lunch, Richardson?"

"Yes, I've just had a bite."

"We want you to try the Crevelli murder case tomorrow afternoon."

"All right, but not quite so suddenly as that. If you can put it off three or four days—"

"Oh, I guess you can get a short continuance."

"I can attend to it, then. I'm sorry Mr. Hagan's absent."

"Yes, had to leave town of a sudden. Doesn't leave any address."

"Tired out!" said Simmons.

"Yes—tried a whole case last year," added Jones, with a laugh.

"Gentleman out here to see you, Mr. Richardson," an office boy announced.

Proceeding to his own room, Richardson found three or four labor leaders, among whom Dickson was most prominent.

"You know all these boys, I believe," said Dickson.

"Yes, I think every one of them. Oh, yes, yes!"

"Fine weather we're having."

"Couldn't be better," replied John.

"I saw you in the car this morning, by the way."

"Oh, yes!" answered John. Dickson hesitated a moment and then said:

"The boys feel they're going to get fair play now you're in this office, Mr. Richardson."

"They surely shall," replied John, "though I hope they've always been getting fair play here, for that matter."

"Oh, we've nothing to say about that, but we do say we're relying on you a little specially."

"I'm glad you feel that I shall do my duty, gentlemen."

"Dickson puts it right," said one of the others, "when he says we're relying on you a little specially."

"And what is it that's to be particularly talked of this morning?"

"Maybe you know, Mr. Richardson, and maybe you don't, that this Locksport business is going to come to a head," replied Dickson.

"Yes, and cursed soon," added another.

"Yes? Well, what do you suggest?"

"Why, we want that man Locksport arrested. That's the first thing."

"And it ain't going to stop there, either," remarked another.

"No, we've got some one else in mind."

"Never mind about that now," observed Dickson. "This is business enough for the present. What about it, Mr. Richardson?"

"Several things," replied Richardson. "Arresting a millionaire's no joke. He'll stand on all his rights with the best lawyers in town. You say, of course, this man's president of the company, must know all about the situation, must be giving the orders and all

that, but when it comes to proof in a criminal case, you have to be certain. Now, Locksport's one day in New York, another in Philadelphia, a third in Chicago or Cleveland. He hasn't a particle of principle, and will swear in a minute that his manager's been running everything. He'll admit, probably, that he knew the works were surrounded by guards, but he'll swear this, he supposed, was to protect the men inside, not to keep them there. Add to this that I'm a new man here, must go slow and—"

"We may as well be frank with you, Mr. Richardson, we don't trust that man Hagan," said Dickson.

John colored a little, for he was loyal to the man who had appointed him, saying, "I think you do Mr. Hagan an injustice, gentlemen."

"No matter for that. He's away, anyway, and you're the man to act."

"I'll do my duty, gentlemen."

"That's the way to talk, Mr. Richardson."

Richardson then proceeded to tell them the kind of evidence he would want, assigning at the same time a young man, whom he called, to put the matter in legal form, after which he himself would pass upon it and give it such corrections as he might think were required. The whole thing, he added, could be put in motion by the day after to-morrow.

"Not till day after to-morrow?" asked one of the men.

"That's pretty long," added Dickson, and it was not till after some talk that they were satisfied that the delay was not unreasonable. When they had at length spoken their fill, they passed out of the office, and as they were about to descend the stairs, the chief in im-

portance among them next to Dickson remarked to that gentleman, "I think you might just as well have given him a dig about Severn as not."

"Leave that to me," replied Dickson. "I don't know whether that was Severn's girl he was with this morning or not. There are ten thousand girls in this town the man might be with, and I'm sorry I mentioned it to you."

"Well, it's mighty funny anyway, especially after what the paper said this morning about his selling out to Severn. You can bet that he's getting more than that place is worth—not that I mean he's dishonest or anything of that kind, because I'd trust Richardson just as much as any of you, but it's human nature to take more than a thing's worth if it's offered to you."

"Well, we'll not talk any more about it," replied Dickson. "He says he's going to do his duty and that's all we want."

It was only a few moments later that Richardson himself went out of the building, for it was now approaching three o'clock and he had entirely forgotten the payments due upon his mortgage, either of interest or of principal, relying upon his talk a few days previous with Edwards of the Mechanics' National Bank. He betook himself to that place of business, where he was fortunate to find the financier at once. Mr. Edwards had that kind of banking countenance that can with equal sweetness invite a deposit or reject a loan.

"Oh, that mortgage? Why, yes, yes, I had forgotten. No, you can't pay it here, Richardson. The fact is, we sold the thing the other day."

"It was only the other day that I was talking about it to you," said Richardson.

"Yes, yes, I know—but the examiner, who happened to be in here afterwards, took exception to our carrying that kind of fixed loan—National banks can't do it, you know—they can't loan on real estate, and while we do it, we don't think it's right to do it after it's complained of. I—I never like to vary from the law at all if there's going to be a fuss made about it, so just as soon as the examiner said he'd rather have us dispose of that thing, I sold it over here to the Smoky City."

"Smoky City Trust Company?"

"Yes, Smoky City Trust Company. I wouldn't be in such a hurry, though, if I were you. Anybody will be delighted to carry that thing as long as they can. Perfect security."

After a few commonplaces, John made his way to the office of the Trust Company which was about to close its doors for the day. A clerk with a pen behind each ear, though he was the proper person to answer the question, was quite nonplussed to recall anything, being obliged to call another gentleman to his assistance.

"Oh, yes, I remember now," said one of them. "Yes, I think we got that in the other day. What about it, Mr. Richardson?"

"I want to pay my interest or see what else you want done about it. This is the day it matures, and Mr. Edwards of the Mechanics' National before he sold it told me it would be all right to let it go on with the mere payment of interest."

"Oh, yes, I see!"

"Well, will you look it up now?"

"No hurry about it at all, Mr. Richardson."

"That's very kind of you," replied Richardson, "but I think I'd rather know to-night just how I stand."

"Oh, that's all right. Don't you worry your head a minute about that. If it wasn't a good loan we wouldn't have bought it, and if it's a good one, we don't care how long it carries."

"Well," continued Richardson, "I don't care to be insistent about this thing, but at the same time it's just a matter of business to attend to it, so I'll draw my check here for the interest," saying which he took out a small check book and drew for the proper amount. When he tendered it, however, the young man blandly objected.

"Sorry, Mr. Richardson, but the check isn't certified and of course I'd have to have it certified—just a rule of the bank, you know, don't amount to anything, but then I have no authority to violate it."

"But it's after three o'clock now," argued John.

"Oh, well, let the whole thing stand over till to-morrow. No use to worry about it."

"Well, for that matter, I'll just leave the check here with you."

"All right. Just leave it here and we'll put it in with to-morrow's business. Fine day, isn't it?"

"Yes. Good morning," said John, as he passed out of the door, "and I'll come in to-morrow and see whether you wish the principal taken up and how soon."

CHAPTER XVIII

EVERYBODY owes at least one of his virtues to his dislike of some one else. Kate Severn, the more she reflected upon the good qualities of John Richardson, became the more willing to applaud them because she knew them to be despised by her step-mother and Shortridge. Even more was her honest nature inflamed by what she had seen in the hovels of her father's workmen. In defense of Richardson as well as in the cause of justice and mercy she recalled with contempt all she had been listening to during the greater part of her lifetime concerning the rights of capital and the unreasonableness of the lowly.

She was, in truth, a type of which we have reason to be proud in American women. The general freedom of our democracy, while it takes from our girls a pleasing diffidence, gives them in compensation an enterprising spirit, a self-reliance in emergencies and a discernment of character that makes us millions of happy homes. They may appear a little forward to the damsels of the Faubourg Saint Germain or even to the young women who play golf in Kent and Sussex, but they are well adapted to the men with whom they have to live, to the race of which they are a part, and to the customs of our people. Well may they boast, moreover, that almost universally their flirtations end with the betrothal ring, their coquetries at the altar.

That afternoon, receiving word that her father de-

sired her in his room, she came to him in wonder as to what was next to happen.

His intention to take her abroad adding so great an obstacle to her love, she was in no pleasant mind, nor was he in a better as he perused in the evening paper an account of an accident at his mills and declared that he should have on his hands another batch of settlements.

"I didn't know they cost you much," said she.

"Oh, it doesn't cost much, doesn't it! If you had to pay the bills instead of talking about them, you'd think they were dear enough."

"Well, what does it cost, father?"

"Why, how should I know? I don't attend to such things."

"But who takes care of them when they're hurt?"

"Why, that's their matter. Their friends and neighbors and relatives, I suppose. We're not running a hospital. We're no insurance company. Do these people want everything? Don't they intend to leave anything to me? Why, it's all I can do to live. It costs me six hundred thousand a year, yes, six hundred thousand a year just to live. They never take that into consideration. Oh, no! not that crowd!"

"But what do the injured men do?"

"What they've always done, I suppose. It's a risk of the business. They know it before they go into it."

"But just to think, father, of having one's legs cut off—"

"Of course it's bad, nobody denies that, but I tell you it's a risk of the business, and as for their feeling so terrible about it, while of course it's bad enough,

yet you don't want to look at it from our point of view. They do feel bad about it, but they don't feel as a man like me would feel."

"What?"

"I don't mean to be unkind when I say it, but a man who works in a mill all his life and is covered with dirt and grime, hasn't the same dignity to lose when his legs are cut off as a man like me. I'm sorry for them, of course I'm sorry, but there's no use of exaggerating. There's all sorts of sentimental twaddle about these things all the time. Take this matter of an eight-hour day. I hope I'll never live to see the day when any man works less than ten or twelve hours. They're never happy when they do. They simply get drunk or idle their time away."

By this time they were joined by Mrs. Severn who, hearing the latter part of these remarks, heartily coincided, adding that nice people now-a-days could hardly go out of doors on Sunday because of the common people.

"Yes," continued Severn, "I wonder if we're not morally responsible for shortening their work hours and letting them out of doors this way."

"It seems to me," said Kate, "that it's generally the ignorant foreigners that we bring—"

"Absurd!" exclaimed Mrs. Severn.

"Yes, infernal nonsense," added Severn. "You've been reading some of these muck-raking magazines. If another one of the cursed things comes in here, I'll have it thrown out!"

Fuming over this, he had limped to the window, where the sight of Richardson's house gave him further irritation.

"That's the way fellows like this Richardson talk," he continued. "He's a nice one, isn't he? Sounds fine to hear him talk about Sunday outings and airings for the poor! I don't suppose the fellow takes a bath once a year himself."

The effect of this on Kate may easily be imagined, as the stepmother was but poorly concealing her mirth behind a newspaper; nor was her anger any the less because she had to hide it. Affecting to smile, she at the same time made an impatient movement of the hand which showed that she was very dissatisfied with her father's doctrine.

"I don't know where in the world you come by any of these ideas of yours," the father went on.

"Don't know, I'm sure."

"God knows I've done nothing to put such ideas into your head."

"No, I'm sure you've not."

"It's from your mother," he said, "that's the only way to account for it. She always had that infernal democratic streak in her."

"What's that you say about my mother?" exclaimed Kate, delighted to give vent to her wrath under so plausible a cause. "Don't you talk that way about my mother! Don't you say another word about her! How dare you talk that way about my mother, calling her a democrat and all that! How dare you talk that way about my mother?"

"Hoity-toity!"

"I'll never let anybody use that language about my mother."

"Your mother! Well, if she's your mother she was my wife, wasn't she?"

"Your wife? No. How can she be your wife? You've got another."

"Now, Wallowell!" exclaimed Mrs. Severn, "you see—"

"Just leave her to me," replied the husband. "She'll be on the Atlantic Ocean within ten days, if my head's hot."

Kate in the meantime had taken her seat and was saying nothing.

"To Europe?" asked Mrs. Severn.

"Yes, and within ten days or two weeks at the most. Do you hear that?"

"While it's none of my business, I take the liberty of commending it," added Mrs. Severn, but Kate had still nothing to say as she looked with defiant unconcern out of the window.

"I may be permitted to say, Kate," went on Mrs. Severn, "that this does seem to be a time when, your father intending to send you abroad, I may heartily concur in it. When did you resolve on this, Wallowell?"

"Well, I only told her yesterday, but I've been thinking about it for a week—and it's settled, I can tell you that now," at which intelligence the face of his wife was a cheerful sight to see and undoubtedly added to the graces of this sweet family.

"I can be ready inside of a week myself," said Severn, "if this infernal strike business doesn't tie us up further, and I don't think it will."

"You will take her yourself?"

"I'll not trust her to go alone, that's sure."

"How long will you be over there, Wallowell?"

"How do I know? You'll probably want to stay

there yourself half a year—you always do, as long as there's anything new to buy."

"Me?"

"Yes, you! Who else?"

"You expect me to go too?"

"What's the matter with you? Do you think I'd be leaving you here? Why should I leave you here?"

"I thought you just wanted to take her over yourself—see her there and come back."

"Well, I didn't! I expect you to go too. Have you any objections?"

"No. Who—who—who—suggested this?"

"I did myself. You don't seem to be pleased."

"Haven't the slightest objection to going, I'm sure, but as the object was—at least I thought it was—to keep your daughter and me somewhat divided, I imagined and think now it would be just as well, if it's all the same to her, that she go over alone or you go with her, coming back, of course, as soon as you can."

"Oh, I'm in no more of a hurry to go than you are, for that matter," said Kate at last, to which the other lady perceiving in this some allusion to her own affair responded:

"I really don't know what possible reasons you may have for staying here, though I can imagine some."

"What's that now?" asked Severn.

"Oh, nothing," replied his wife, "and I see no need of talking this matter over at this time. I think we can take the subject up this evening. I mean our going abroad at all."

"What's this new allusion she's hinting at?" asked Severn as his wife left the room.

"I'm sure I don't know, and I don't care," answered Kate.

"Well, you can answer me, can't you, in a politer tone?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'm a man to be respected in my own house."

"Yes, sir." This she uttered with an automaton-like precision or mechanical iteration that was peculiarly displeasing to the old man.

"When I say a thing, I mean it."

"Yes, sir."

"Now mind what I say!"

"Yes, sir."

"And I want no more of these democratic speeches and the like in my house."

"No, sir."

"What's all this 'yes, sir,' and 'no, sir,' every time I open my mouth? Are you mocking me?"

"No, sir!"

"There you go again!"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you making fun of me?"

"No, sir."

"You're taking advantage of me here. You know how these pains are shooting through me. Ouch! Out of the room with you at this minute! Send Wattles here or that other flunkey. What are you standing there for? Why don't you get out when I tell you to?"

By this time his daughter was well out of the room and very happy to seek her own apartments. The inevitable clash with her father, she felt, was fast approaching.

CHAPTER XIX

RICHARDSON slept little that night after his walk with Kate, but he lay awake as much from happiness as from anxiety. The poor fellow's emotions were conflicting indeed. During one hour he felt sure of her regard, during another nothing seemed further beyond him. Moreover, as soon as he was able to convince himself that her affections were within his reach, he was utterly discouraged by the inequality of their situations. Her wealth created in him, indeed, no awe or feeling of inferiority, for nobody had ever seemed to him a whit the finer or more important because of money, but he could see, alas too plainly, what an obstacle it was.

He arose the next morning, nevertheless, the better for the total of his reflections and, turning to the Crevelli case, was able to obtain a short postponement. As to Dickson's business, though he was expecting his subordinate to report, he was not surprised to hear nothing that day, and plunging into a study of the law against Locksport, it was three o'clock before he be-thought himself of the Smoky City Trust Company. The check not having been returned, he assumed that it had been accepted, so he decided to let the matter wait another day.

As the afternoon wore on his impatience again to see Kate so increased that it was as early as five o'clock

when he arrived home. Music was already wafted from his rich neighbor's lawn. Beyond the hedge he could see the forms of elegantly dressed women, so he resolved to await their departure and, after loitering in the pagoda as usual, to let Kate herself indicate when she would be free to see him. He mused with mixed feelings until he heard a voice behind him.

"You're home a little early to-day, John," said Tom Richardson.

"Ah, you here? Why, yes, Tom, a little early, I think."

"Hagan in the office to-day?"

"No."

"Where do they say he is?" Tom sat down.

"He left no word. I suppose you want to know, Tom, what's been done in those matters we talked of the other day, so I'll tell you now that Dickson was in yesterday afternoon, and I gave him full instructions how to make application to our office. One of the younger men there will help him prepare affidavits and then they'll turn it over to me."

"Well?"

"And if it's all right, we'll take action."

"When?"

"To-morrow or next day."

"Why didn't the younger man have the thing ready for you to-day?"

"I don't know, Tom. I've been working like a dog."

"But there's nothing more important, John, than this business, is there? That is, to thousands of people?"

"No, but I can't do everything; and for that matter, Tom, what were you doing that you didn't try to hurry

union, and there couldn't be a better thing to live for than that."

"You're right, there, Tom. My heart is with you. A poor man will go to bed hungry with less complaint than a rich man will make if his automobile's delayed twenty minutes in the street."

"Right, but now you're in the Commonwealth Attorney's office, Hagan away, and you expected to take the most vital action against these infernal scoundrels. There ain't a lawyer in the country that could make me believe our people wouldn't be justified in feeling a little suspicious if something went wrong. Suppose, for instance, you do your best. And suppose, even then, that something slips up in court. Where will the blame go? As for the young lady and you, I don't know whether you ever have any hopes in that direction."

"It's only an acquaintance."

"Of course there's nothing in it—couldn't be anything in it. I've heard you say often enough yourself, John, that this new class that's sprung up in America is away off by itself, can't be bridged over to by the plainer classes as it used to be."

After a silence he resumed.

"Forty million dollars they say old Severn's worth! Think of it! Let's try to imagine what that means. Let's see. Suppose a man ages ago had twenty-five dollars a day. That'd be a big salary. Suppose you had it yourself, eh? Pretty big, John?"

"I suppose so, Tom. Yes."

"Twenty-five a day, or seven hundred and fifty a month, or, say, nine thousand a year. Now a thousand years of that's just nine million dollars! Only

nine millions to old Severn here. Why, it would take four thousand years and more to make his fortune, beginning two thousand years before Christ and long before all those old Greeks and Romans. That's a modern fortune for you! And I suppose he wants more. We're simply ants and insects to Severn."

John remained silent.

"Of course as I say, John, it's none of my business, but I can't help seeing you looking over there wistfully all the time. Your thoughts are always strolling over the hedge, and mother knows it too."

"I don't know after all that this is anybody's business but mine."

"Well, you'll excuse me, as I said before, John, it's none of my business, none of—"

"Tom Richardson, have I ever failed in my duty to any man?"

"No."

"Then, what's all this talk for? I don't mean it unkindly now, but what's it all for?"

"I—I—well, as I say, it's none of my business, John, but you'll excuse my hesitating for I think you have more feeling in this matter than you perhaps let us see—but I'll be plain and square with you. I want you to give her up!"

"Then I'll be equally plain with you. There's nothing to give up, to begin with, and besides, I'll not give up what there is."

Tom Richardson gave him one long look, turned on his heel and walked away, saying half aloud on his way to the gate, "It's always this way. I never knew it to fail. They always tie us up!"

CHAPTER XX

RICHARDSON, though he had been able to answer his brother with so much spirit, was far from feeling equal resolution within, but he was able to fortify his purpose by reflecting with some indignation upon the fact that his being in the street-car with Kate had been reported and, keeping himself in this humor, he was in spite of himself, so to speak, at the pagoda about six o'clock. Alas, the truth of what Dr. Johnson long ago observed: Nothing more surely seduces judgment than the thought of passing one's life with an amiable woman.

He had not been long at the usual seat before Kate herself appeared with two ladies, who followed her out of the Severn grounds past the pagoda in the direction of the river.

"Why, here you are, Mr. Richardson!" exclaimed she as one very much surprised. "Let me introduce my friends, Miss Frale and Miss Olcott."

Mamie Frale, we may advise the reader, was the daughter of a rich steel manufacturer and Miss Olcott the daughter of a very successful railway man, who had stolen so much that all nice families were glad to know him.

"Won't you walk down to the river with us?"

John assenting to this, they were soon in conversation, Miss Frale exhibiting to him her lapdog.

"What's this on his feet?" inquired John.

"Don't you see? That's his shoes, rubber shoes for Toto. Isn't he just too sweet!"

"Beautiful!" answered John, concealing a smile. "Have you any others?"

"Oh, dear, no! Nobody could possibly take the place of Toto. In fact, he wouldn't permit anybody in the house. He'd drive any other dog out, you know! One time somebody did bring in another little pet and Toto was just furious about it. Quite a little tyrant!"

"Mamie's perfectly devoted to that dog," remarked Miss Olcott.

"I should think so!" ejaculated Miss Frale. "Anybody that would say anything unkind to Toto would lose me. There was poor Nellie Henderson that almost had a fight with me about it. Nellie didn't like Toto, didn't like him at all. Poor Nellie! I'll forgive her now—she's dead and gone a year ago last spring. Spring? No, let me see! It was in the Fall, because they had chrysanthemums at the funeral. Why don't you get a dog, Kate?"

"I have enough to do to take care of myself in our house."

"He's the greatest companion, Toto, and you know, Kate, I brought back with me from Europe last spring about a thousand dollars' worth of the prettiest fixings for his kennel, and those brutes at the custom house insisted upon taxing me for them. Why can't we bring back a few little things when we go over there!"

In this she was joined by Miss Olcott, who was very vigorous in denouncing these officials, such as have grown rich by the tariff being always the loudest in

complaint when its exactions are applied to themselves. Ingratitude is proportioned to excess of bounty.

"You know Clara Ringer's dog, I suppose," remarked Miss Frale to John.

"I don't know Miss Ringer."

"N—no? Well, it fell out of Julia Jones' car the other day and was nearly killed. I suppose you know Julia."

"I haven't that pleasure."

"Really! You live—you're a stranger?"

"No, I've lived here all my life."

Miss Frale, perturbed, turned her conversation to the others.

"What do you think?" she cried. "Edith Reddings' cousin, that pretty one who was here last summer, has gone off and married a college professor and the family are awfully upset!"

"Gracious!" exclaimed Miss Olcott.

"What was wrong with him?" John inquired.

"Why, a professor, you know!"

"What—um—what did her family do?" asked Kate.

"Do! You can imagine! Why, she could have married—well, a duke, I guess."

"What—er—what did her friends do?" asked John.

"Why, well, you know, she's dropped out, just naturally, herself."

"Is she happy?" came from Kate.

"They say so. Oh, I guess she's married happily enough but not well."

By this time they had returned to the pagoda, where, as the ladies were passing through the hedge, Kate whispered to Richardson:

"I'll be back in a minute. Just wait here." As they went up the slope to the house, Mamie Frale inquired:

"Who is that man, Kate?"

"Yes," added Miss Olcott, "he's awfully handsome."

"His name is Richardson."

"Richardson? I don't remember that name."

"Where does he live?" inquired Miss Olcott.

"Over there in that cottage."

"In that little—in that place over there?" ejaculated Miss Frale.

"Yes."

"It's rather funny, don't you know, and I must say while I was talking with him I rather noticed—"

"No, you didn't," retorted Kate, "you're just seeing him different because you find he hasn't any money. If I had told you he was some eccentric young multi-millionaire, you'd have been raving about his elegant manners."

By the time the visitors had departed Richardson was forgotten by all but Kate, who without a moment's delay, looking about a little cautiously to see whether she was observed or not, made a rambling return toward that part of the lawn where she could speak across the hedge to John in the pagoda. Looking again she saw nobody on the grounds but herself, as in a happy impulse she cried to him:

"You've got to visit me now. Come over here and sit down on the lawn."

CHAPTER XXI

IT was a perfect evening when they seated themselves on that fair slope and looked across the river at the dapple hills. Though the guests had gone, the musicians were not yet dismissed and there floated through the trees from a distant part of the grounds the fond, the amorous airs of Italy. Neither of the lovers knew just why, but both felt that their relations had been somewhat advanced and that they were a little nearer to each other in sentiment because he had at last become even in this small degree her guest. She was the first to break the silence.

"It seems good to have you here."

"Thank you. I know I've often wanted to be here."

"Even before we met—when you used to see me over the hedge?"

"Yes, and since I've met you, too."

"It's so beautiful this evening, isn't it, Mr. Richardson? So peaceful!"

"Perfect; and these terraces! Nothing can be more beautiful. We're so glad you have them, for our sakes as well as your own, for of course we get the full benefit of them from our cottage."

"Your mother enjoys them, too?"

"Oh, very much! She's an excellent gardener in our own little plot."

Kate was going to urge an invitation that his mother come over soon and see the grounds, but immediately

hesitating she changed the subject by saying: "How much I should like to see your mother! I'm going to see her some day, may I not?"

"Of course you may! That's for you to determine."

Here again the poor girl could say nothing that was perfectly natural, but she inquired:

"Has she ever seen me?"

"Oh, yes, and thinks—"

"Well, why don't you tell me?"

"Oh, perhaps you'd think I was flattering you—or that she was," at which Kate colored with a pleasure which she could not explain even to herself.

"I suppose she thinks I'm a dreadfully frivolous and gay person."

"Well, as to that I couldn't say, because, of course, she knows very little about you."

"She must be very proud of you."

"Oh, all mothers are, for that matter, I hope—proud of their sons."

"Yes, but I think you've done just wonders. Tell me, what assistance did you get in life? Did you do it all yourself—learn to speak that way and get all your education unaided?"

Then he went on to tell her little by little a large part of the story of his life—the history of weary struggle, of self-denial, of disappointments, of opposition from enemies and treachery from friends—of the claw of spite, of the tooth, the sharper tooth of hate, nor could Desdemona herself have hung with more interest on that tale of endeavor. Anecdotes both sad and droll diversified the story, which he beheld her so pleased to hear, with simple feeling and good nature. The depth of her attention could not

be disguised. He saw and deeply felt it. If she loved him for dangers that he had passed, he dearly loved her that she did pity them.

She found her feelings turned against her very father when, without mentioning names, Richardson related his struggles at the head of a movement for reform, and recounted ingenious snares set for him by people of great influence. He described what they called the "business interests," who were often on the side of a vicious administration and had their alliances with the most corrupt elements in the city. She thought of the intriguing Shortridge and the infamous Locksport, then, looking on this simple, honorable and handsome fellow, she almost hated riches.

During this story she had suffered herself to forget what she did not yet believe was a certainty, but the danger of which she could not deny, that is, that she might have to take the trip to Europe, and when at last she mentioned this to him it was with some vigilance out of the corners of her eyes to perceive, as well a girl in love might wish to perceive, what effect it had upon him.

Poor John, for his part, could ill conceal the dismal impression. Turning to look at her, he made a sudden gesture with his right hand as one might do who had been awakened from a dream, exclaiming, "To Europe!"

It was pardonable in a woman to feel some satisfaction in his manner.

"Yes," she responded, turning her head aside, "father says sometime next week."

He arose hastily and, as she remained sitting, remarked in a changed voice:

"It's growing late. It's twilight already."

"Don't be in a hurry," said she, but his face looked very cold as he replied:

"I must be going now."

As she rose reluctantly, he added, "Good-by," extending his hand without appearance of emotion, for all his faculties had now been brought to command his self-control. She, placing her hand in his, turned her head aside but her heart responded to the warmth of his touch.

"You're going to see me again, are you not?" she asked.

Not trusting himself to speak, he hesitated while his eyes wandered from the palace to the cottage in an involuntary comparison, which, as she perceived it, she appreciated only too well, and, since he seemed unable to say anything, she felt it not unmaidenly to stoop a little to conquer.

"Can't you take me—can't you take me to the workmen's part of town again?" she asked. They were both softening now to a degree at which either was likely to let fall some word of weakness, but the man from whom it must naturally first proceed, being the stronger, was able to command himself. Prudence found love escaping on his lips and frightened it back to his heart.

"To-morrow," he said, "I have a great deal of work to do, too important to be neglected even for an hour. Let me see!" He hesitated while reason struggled against desire.

"Well," she suggested sweetly, "the next day, or the one after that?"

"On Thursday, other work will probably keep me

busy, but Friday, probably, yes, Friday morning at the same place as before."

"I'm sure to be there promptly, Mr. Richardson, and—and—" here she hesitated, "I really don't care to go to Europe at all."

He gave her a quick look and his lips parted in speech, but the girl, whose head had been turned modestly aside, exclaimed in a low voice:

"My stepmother—she's coming this way. I see her," at which John, looking also, perceived Mrs. Severn about a hundred yards away.

"You needn't hurry on her account," said Kate, a little ashamed to have intimated that she had anything to fear from that lady, but Richardson feeling that he might as well depart, observed:

"I must return. Friday morning at eleven, then?"

"I shall be very punctual," said she, and they parted.

With strangely mixed feelings he went back to the little cottage, on the porch of which he found a man waiting for him.

"You are Mr. Richardson?"

"Yes."

"John Richardson?"

"Yes."

"Then I have this paper for you," said the man handing it to him and walking abruptly away.

Richardson had only to glance at it to know what it was, process in foreclosure in the United States Court in the suit of John Ray, a citizen of New York, against John Richardson, a citizen and resident of the State of Pennsylvania. The blood mounting to his temples he glanced about in a half-bewildered way as if to find fault with somebody or to protest against

the injustice, with which unfortunate expression on his face he was interrupted by his mother.

"That man," she said, "he's gone, has he, and left you that paper? What's the matter, John?"

"Oh, nothing, mother, nothing."

"But you look troubled. What is it, John, what's in that paper?"

"Oh, never mind, mother. It's nothing more than we meet with every day in the practice of the law. It's a private matter, mother, don't bother about it."

Eating his dinner in a vexed humor, he was not, indeed, disturbed further by his mother respecting the document, but he was glad to find excuse later to withdraw to his own room with a book. He was to meet Kate again, yet to that he looked forward with only mixed satisfaction. In a fortnight probably she would be on the high seas, a week later in a foreign pleasure resort, in a month amused to recall the flirtation of a few September days or her fancy for an impecunious neighbor. The proud fellow reflected with natural discontent upon the very circumstance of their parting that afternoon, the appearing of the stepmother, the involuntary willingness of Kate to end their interview when a member of her household beheld it, and the retreat, so to speak, that he had made from premises into which he had not been invited beyond the border. Neither to himself nor to her was it fair that he, the older, should prolong this irregular acquaintance. Then he would recall the look in her eyes, and dwell on that. Then he would glance from his window to see if there was a light in the rooms which he thought were hers.

Confessing himself a fool, he was obeying in spite

of himself a law of gravitation in social intercourse. We invariably seek the company of those above us notwithstanding our greatest happiness is commonly found among our inferiors.

CHAPTER XXII

MRS. SEVERN had not been observing the drift of Kate's conduct without satisfaction. The latter's argument with her father about goodness to injured laborers disclosed, she well knew, an attitude or turn of mind in the girl more irritating to him than an hundred various acts of temper or disobedience, for on this point his prejudices were not only deep from infancy but sore from public comment.

There now occurred a new reason to feel that she was getting the better of her rebellious stepdaughter. Of all the servants in the house Wattles was much the most pleasing to old man Severn. While the latter would not let the fellow discover it through any unnecessary praise or compliment, he had nevertheless often admitted to his wife that this creature was by far the most efficient man he had ever had, nor did any of the other domestics ever long survive the hostility of Mr. Wattles. Mrs. Severn was accordingly extremely pleased when she was approached by Wattles with complaints against Nora. Kate, it was clear, would take the part of her maid, the butler would threaten to leave the house, and a serious, disagreeable controversy would arise.

"Hi'm very sorry to be making complaints at hall, Mrs. Severn," began Wattles, "but Hi suppose you'd not mind my speaking my mind a bit about one of the maids in this 'ouse."

"Go on."

"Hi really think, Mrs. Severn, that hit's me duty, not only to meself, but to you, mum, to bring the report to you that Hi can no longer submit to the disagreeable hattitude of this young woman, Nora."

"What about her, Wattles?"

"Well, hit's a very long story, mum, and Hi 'ope you'll pardon my hopening the subject to you at all."

"Go on!"

"You know, mum, it amounts to this, mum, that for these last two or three months this young woman has made it a p'int to be exceedingly disagreeable to me whenever occasions of the 'ouse 'ere 'ave forced us to be together. Not that Hi'm ever seekin' 'er company in the least, nor that Hi even hencourage 'er, and it may be that it's because Hi don't hencourage 'er that she's getting so resentful toward me. But as Hi was a-sayin', mum, 'er hattitude is one of extreme himpudence and is a-gettin' worse every day, so that a self-respecting person like myself 'as got to a pint where 'e 'as got to let it be hunderstood 'ow 'e stands with the 'ouse, and of course, mum, not to involve hanybody in trouble or cause hany 'ardness, Hi feel it me duty to be hofferin' you a vacancy now in me place as butler."

"What does she say to you?"

"Oh, mum, Hi wouldn't dare to take hup your time or to repeat such things to you."

"Have you spoken to Mr. Severn about this?"

"Not as yet, mum, not as yet. Hi thought it was me first duty to be reportin' it to you, mum. There bein' besides, mum, if Hi may be so bold has to hintimate it, a certain other reason which Hi don't care

to repeat, why this young woman hought not to be in this 'ouse, not being particularly loyal to it."

"You needn't go into particulars," replied Mrs. Severn, who had her reasons for fearing too nice a detail of the conversations of the kitchen. "And as for its bothering Mr. Severn," she continued, "I don't think it will give him any too great trouble. Just walk in here with me now."

The butler following her into the apartments where Severn was reading his newspapers by a window, the same blunderbuss of complaint was discharged, and though Wattles did not specify any language or point out any unusually exasperating impudence of the girl, he did make it very clear that a point had been reached at which he would not remain in the house, for the rascal well knew his advantage and could see as soon as he began his complaints that he was master of the situation. Severn having listened to it all finally dismissed him in no unpleasant language.

"What's the use of having me bothered with this affair?" said he to Mrs. Severn after Wattles had gone out.

"Why, because he's your servant."

"Of course he's my servant, but what I mean is, why didn't you discharge the girl yourself and put an end to this trouble without bringing it upstairs here to me?"

"Because the girl is Kate's servant, and I don't propose to discharge her maid and have a quarrel with her without your consent or your previous authority."

"All right, you have my consent and previous authority now. Throw her out of the house!"

"Suppose Kate objects?"

"She hasn't objected yet, has she?"

"But she will."

"How do you know?"

"Because I tell you she will! You might as well settle right now what you're going to do if Kate objects."

"Are you going to stand there arguing with me?" he began in a loud voice. "If you keep on, I'll put her and you and all of you out of the house. Why don't you go outside there now and tell that girl to pack up her things and leave us?"

"You're speaking to me like a slave!"

"Well, you don't appear to be obeying like a slave."

"No, because I'm not a slave. I'm your wife, you'll understand. Why, just look at you—just look at the mealy-mouthed way you spoke to that butler. You treat that creature better than you do me. You daren't look cross at him once. Why don't you treat him as you treat me?"

"Do you suppose I want to lose him?"

"Oh, so that's it!" she cried, beside herself with wrath. "You can abuse me as you please, can you, because I have to stay here? Oh, I have to, have I? Maybe you'll find out to your sorrow a different side of things! What kind of treatment have you ever given me? Is there another woman in this town that's been treated as shabbily as I have?"

"I spend a fortune on you every year, and you know it!"

"It's false; you dole out to me the least possible dollar that you can give me, and whatever you do give me is given me not for my sake, but for yours, and to keep up appearances with other people. Look at me!

Look at me! Look at the meanness I've had to endure. For years you made me ride in those nasty Pullman cars—made me put up with those dirty little compartments there. Didn't I have to fight for years before I got a private railroad car from you when every other woman of my class in this town had one, without a fight to get it?"

"I'm no rich man, I'm no Rockefeller. I've got something, I suppose, a—"

"You've got millions and millions!"

"You're the most extravagant woman on the American continent."

"You know better. You know I wear my gowns longer than any other woman in town, two or three as many as a dozen times. You've even haggled with me about the wages of my maid."

"Yes, you raised that French hussy of yours two dollars a month!"

"I had to. She wanted five or would have left!"

"A nice way to throw money away! How do you think that sounds when you know I have to spend twenty thousand dollars on my kennels. Every man in town has better. I'm ashamed of mine—and yet you go raising that girl's wages right under my nose! And the waste in our kitchen is something terrific. I've seen them carting away barrels and barrels of good food there. Haven't I told you five hundred times that whatever's thrown in the garbage ought to be given to the poor? Haven't you any charity in you?"

The rich, prodigal of thousands, are frugal of pennies. A hundred thousand is added to a yacht, a dime is saved in a waiter's tip.

"Don't talk to me!" she cried. "Not another word!" and with this was out of the room.

While she had left a peevish husband and may appear to have irritated him against herself, she had only repeated one of many little scenes that left on his mind no permanently disagreeable impression. It was the original cause of the conversation, the improper behavior of Nora, that took hold of him at once, for, not liking this maid himself, he had once or twice made some trivial complaint of her to Kate only to find the latter too ready with excuses and apologies. Nothing had come of these small irritations because Nora was seldom in his way. He now resolved that this girl should be at once dismissed, a determination which, even in advance, ruffled him against Kate.

CHAPTER XXIII

LIFE is not the pursuit of happiness but a flight from evils. Richardson was indeed an unhappy and mortified man when he arose the next morning, for the first words that caught his eye in the morning print were, "His House under Foreclosure; Assistant Commonwealth Attorney doesn't Look after his Bills."

At first he would have hidden the paper from his mother, but fearing that she might hear of the matter from some other source before he could have it remedied, he made a clean breast of it, assuring her that it could only be a trivial inconvenience, for, the property being worth much more than the loan, he would have no difficulty in getting a similar sum upon it from some other lender. Leaving her comforted, he repaired to his office and, as soon as the banks were opened, went to see Edwards.

Mr. Edwards was mystified. What in the world could the Smoky City people mean? The property was worth a great deal more than the loan. Anybody could see that. Anybody would lend money on that place. Nobody could hope to acquire the property by foreclosure, for it was only a step to go somewhere else and get the same amount. It was an infernal shame, he said, to treat a man in this way. Richardson need not bother his head about the matter ten minutes.

Upon this the latter suggested that in case there

might be any difficulty with the unreasonable plaintiff in foreclosure, a loan be obtained of Mr. Edwards himself, but Mr. Edwards was very clear that this would not be necessary. The whole thing, he was sure, was simply a mistake. Some hasty law clerk had hurried to make fees without authority. Just go to the Smoky City people at once and have the loan reinstated.

Thanking him after a fashion, John went now to the office of the Smoky City Trust Company. Nothing could exceed the regret of these gentlemen at their having been, even for a time, connected with so lamentable a transaction. All they knew about it was that they had bought the loan from the Mechanics' National a few days before and immediately afterwards had sold it to a gentleman in New York.

"You see," said the manager, "we have requests all the time for this kind of paper, and regarding the loan as good we simply disposed of it along with twenty or thirty others a few days ago."

"But," said John, "do you know who the plaintiff is? Do you know this John Ray?"

"No, haven't the slightest idea who he is. We didn't sell the thing to John Ray. Don't know who he is, even."

"Well, but to whom did you sell it?"

"Well, now, Mr. Richardson, you know this thing being in litigation, perhaps we shouldn't answer these questions too freely. We may be treading on somebody's rights, you know."

"In what way?"

"Oh, well, you can understand that yourself. Somebody has bought this paper and in his own discretion

is about to foreclose it. Now, he doesn't want us to answer questions as to when and how we came by this thing, or as to when and how we sold it to him. As I say, we didn't sell it to John Ray—don't even know the man. We sold it to an institution in New York that continually buys these loans from us."

"I'm here to ask questions that I've a right to ask," said John sternly, "and I want them answered. You can do as you please about answering them, but I will do as I please hereafter in some other ways. Now I left a check with you to pay my interest on the day that thing was due. That check has never been returned to me."

"Just a minute," replied the manager coolly, touching a bell, which was responded to very soon by the young man in whose care John had left the check on the day of maturity. The clerk bowed to Richardson and did not disguise that he remembered him.

"What did you do with Mr. Richardson's check that he says he left with you the other day here?"

"The one that I spoke to you about?"

The manager colored a little as he said, "Why, no—yes, oh, yes, I believe you did mention that to me. What did you do with it?"

"Why, I did as you said, I sent it back to him."

"I've never received it," remarked John.

"Oh, I didn't mail it back to you till the next day sometime," replied the clerk. "You've probably got it by this time—it may be in your mail this morning."

"I haven't found it yet," said John. "I was at my office this morning, just came from there a little while ago."

Here the manager explained that as he understood

"Why, Mr. Dickson here, and some other gentlemen called—eh—Tuesday morning, and they didn't have things quite in shape. I told them how the thing should be fixed."

"Yes, and we tried to fix it right, too," said Dickson, "and nothing seemed to please you, Mr. Robinson, though I'm making no complaint especially."

"Of course you're not a lawyer," replied Robinson.

"No, you can't say that of me."

"The point's here, Mr. Robinson," broke in Tom, "we wanted to see—or rather Mr. Dickson tells me he wanted to see my brother here on Tuesday, but you kept telling him that my brother was too busy to see him and had left word to that effect."

"Oh, well, I did say something like that," Robinson responded. "The order around here is not to have the heads interrupted too often by the people that come in. I'll be frank to say Mr. Richardson hadn't left any such special word at all about Mr. Dickson."

"Well, what have you done, Robinson?" inquired John.

Robinson then returning to his room, brought back in a few minutes a little bundle of papers which John hastily examined.

"I think I'll excuse you from further connection with this business. That will do, Mr. Robinson. I'll look after it now myself."

Tom insisted that John should have given the fellow a scolding and Dickson also seemed to think the offender had been getting off pretty lightly, but this calling no comment at all from Richardson, they proceeded, the three, to a full consideration of the matter. In two or three hours, the necessary papers were

at last made out and the proper officers dispatched for the arrest of Locksport.

"Here's my hand, Mr. Richardson," exclaimed Dickson as they came out of the office of the magistrate before whom the papers were laid.

"And mine, too!" cried Tom.

"It is the beginning of a long fight, I imagine, gentlemen, but I rather enjoy the prospect. I believe that fellow to be an infernal scoundrel and I'm after him."

"It'll make fine reading for him in the evening papers, won't it, for him and his friends?" observed Tom. "They'll find other kinds of news gets into the papers."

"Men like Locksport haven't much fear of the state authorities," said John. "They don't stand much in awe of us county officers, I'm afraid. The people to get after men like these are the Federal authorities, but the trouble is, they don't often infringe the Federal laws. What I want to show them is, that there's power enough in this community to punish them when the right men stand behind the guns. Now, gentlemen, I've got a speech to deliver, as you know, in about an hour or two, so I'll try to get my thoughts together."

"And we'll be there to hear you," said Dickson.

"Yes, and we'll enjoy it all the more because just about that time I'm hoping the extras will be on the street announcing that that fellow Locksport's in the hands of an officer," Tom Richardson added.

Dickson now went out and Tom lingered behind.

"You don't feel worried about this mortgage, do you, John?"

"Not a bit. If I weren't so busy to-day with some other things I'd go out at once and get another loan."

"Mother doesn't feel particularly worried either, does she?"

"A little, but I think I quieted her. I see you have the same suspicions I have as to why that case was pressed. The lawyers for that man Ray happen to be lawyers that Locksport gives a good deal of business to."

"Oh, I see that clearly enough, John. Nobody starts a foreclosure an hour after a mortgage is due unless he has an object. Well, I must be going. This will be hot stuff on the streets pretty soon," saying which he left John's office and passed into the outer hall, where he fell in with little Eddie. He winked to the boy and gave him a kindly nod as he passed out.

"That's his brother," said Eddie to another boy. "I hope they get that Locksport sure. Feel sorry they've started that mortgage on Richardson. I've got twelve and a half in the Dollar Bank and Richardson can have that sure enough if it will do him any good."

John was already hard at work arranging memoranda for his speech, and, interrupted frequently on affairs of the office, he found it one o'clock when Eddie rushed in with a newspaper extra. John read the headlines with an eager glance.

"REGINALD H. LOCKSPORT ARRESTED!"

"RICHARDSON RETALIATES FOR FORECLOSURE."

"LOCKSPORT GIVES BAIL AND EXPRESSES CONTEMPT."

Then followed a brief account, such as could be had on short notice, of what had occurred. Mr. Locksport, it stated, had been arrested very rudely in his

office without warning. The information charged him with the crime of keeping in prison in the Western Steel Works one William Gregory. It then continued:

"Mr. Locksport stated to our representative that the whole attack was a complete surprise. He had been maintaining an armed guard in as conservative a manner as possible to protect a body of workmen remaining in the Works in fear of their lives, on account of molestation from the strikers. As to the motive that led to his arrest, he has no doubt of a personal spite upon which at this time he did not care to make further comment. A recent mortgage foreclosure begun against an officer in the Commonwealth Attorney's office who had been very neglectful of his debts was intimated, however, as a probable cause for this extraordinary action."

Below this, in what is called a "square," was a brief expression of opinion by the journal itself.

"Our public service," it ran, "is reaching a deplorable stage indeed, when officers charged with the impartial administration of justice can so obviously indulge their personal resentment. The absence of Mr. Hagan at this time from the city would under ordinary conditions make youthful subordinates in temporary charge a little cautious in the exercise of such grave responsibility. We are glad to note that Mr. Locksport has already given bail and will fight this case to a finish."

Laying this down half in anger, half amused, John looked up to see before him Darius Totten of the Public Welfare League. He had a sweet, round face,

this Totten, which advised you in advance that he could be no business man. What was worse, he had retired from a manufacturing plant with only a few hundred thousand to try to do good in leisure, on account of which small sum his family was not reckoned nice by others that remained in hogs or hides or scrap-iron in order to pile one million on another. Attacking at first only the criminal element, he was set down by the mercantile world as merely queer, but when he proceeded to assail the combination between criminals and certain business men who were bent on governing the town, the former for immunity, the latter for franchises, he was denounced as a lunatic no longer harmless but as a disturber of finance and an enemy of the town.

"They're firing on you already, I see," said Totten.

"Yes, yes. Sit down, Mr. Totten."

"No, thank you. I've just a moment to step in and tell you the League feels gratified by this. We'd been hoping something from Mr. Hagan, but—"

"Oh, I think he's all right," interposed John, "he's all right. It's we younger men who stir things up."

"That's the way to talk. If money's needed, we've got that, too, to help with, though small enough beside what the other side can put up." He beamed reform.

"Well, this being public business, the public treasury has to stand the charge, though you can assist, of course, with employment of private searchers for evidence and the like."

"Seems hard, Mr. Richardson, the difficulties our leading citizens throw in our way. Hardly an official dares to aid us, and you're one of the few. However, we have to be patient. It takes time, takes time."

"I wish we had more people like you, Mr. Totten."

"Oh, I don't do half what I should. I'm not so young as I used to be—just old enough to be stubborn, I suppose they'd say. But I can sleep well every night. Maybe some other people can't."

"I'm afraid they do, though," John added, "so far as moral reflections concern them. When they lie awake it's about danger to their money."

"Yes, or about making more, I suppose. I'm sanguine, though. I believe in the future. Well, must be going. Good-by for a day or so. We'll see. I'll drop in to hear your little talk this afternoon."

CHAPTER XXIV

A LARGE crowd gathered at the new Central Labor Hall to hear the favorite young orator upon his proposed Compensation Acts. It was an address at noon when many might attend without loss of time from their employments. Dickson sat as chairman and introduced Richardson amid great applause, but noticed, as he cast his eye over the house, many persons whom he had reason to distrust and whom, from his experience, he knew to be there to cause trouble.

Richardson began with the pleasant artifice in which great speakers since the days of the Greeks have apologized for their appearing to claim unduly the public attention or to press their ideas when others, including their hearers, could so readily offer better; nor would he presume to intrude his suggestions if it were not that the practice of speaking gave him some boldness to express before an audience what his hearers lacked only the leisure to present. Such an exordium in easy colloquial tone was imperceptibly succeeded by a style more animated, indeed, but retaining the simplicity of expression suitable to a popular assemblage. It was as if Demosthenes were persuading you in the language of South or Atterbury.

"The past forty years have made us a splendid but not a happy land. In the first half of our glorious history a famous foreigner, a man of enduring fame in

the science of government, Alexis de Tocqueville, visiting our fortunate country extolled among other felicities of our ancestors this, that there was plain among us a general equality of conditions. Where, alas, is that equality now? The difference between the poorest and the highest is so much widened that—but I will not dwell on a change so sad. Three per cent. of our people, three in every hundred, own, so terribly clear are the statistics, as much as the other ninety-seven put together. They fill the seas with their yachts, our railways with their private cars. They dazzle us at the theatre with precious stones. They crowd us on the highways with powerful machines.

“The contentment of labor is the only security of capital. What has been done, then, these forty years for the working people? I declaim not against any man simply because he is rich, but only that the rich are increasing their gains at the expense of the poor.

“Let me explain. First, that unjust system of taxation, the tariff laws. All the expenses of the national government, billions of dollars (I speak not now of the state governments), are unduly assessed upon the poor, for the tariff taxes chiefly what goes into the stomach or upon the back and there is no national taxation upon either income or property. Secondly, since a tariff must, by excluding competition from merchants abroad, tend to make monopoly and higher prices at home, the cost of living is increased so that clerks and bookkeepers, slaves who toil with weary mind in artificial light, and laborers who struggle long hours with their hands, find their wages not increased in proportion or at all.

“Five hundred dollars is now the average annual

wage of an American workman. Upon this no man can save a dollar. Yet higher, higher rises the price of what we must eat to live and wear to be decent. But here another grievance. In every country except our own capital through government has relieved the plight of wage-earners falling ill or becoming crippled. In all others it has believed itself bound to aid them in the accidents of dangerous employments. In all others it has acknowledged that a crippled father means a pauper family."

Here he expounded the systems of various European countries. He instanced especially Germany, where, he said, the health of the meanest laborer was regarded with concern. "They reason there that every laboring man or woman is to be the parent of citizens and that a state can no more be strong with thousands of crippled paupers than a human body can be sound that has rotten toes."

"In forty years of our increasing wealth not one law has been passed to save our labor from the woes of beggary, from blindness, or from crippled limbs. Nearly one hundred thousand men, a loss like that of war, are every year maimed and flung out of doors. What is their relief? To bring a suit. Against whom? A millionaire employer or his soulless insurance company. Unequal struggle! He starves, the plaintiff, while he files the papers. But what of the case? He can win only if he prove himself in no wise in error. Unhappy man! Worn out with a long day's toil he turned to the right between two flying rods in the roaring of the mill when he should have turned to the left! He was negligent and fails! Oh, mockery, mockery that he should have to debate the thing.

Even if he were not negligent, necessity to prove this is to the hungry and the weak defeat at the outset.

"Shame on such a system! With unlimited bounty they have been providing for the soldiers of a war nearly fifty years past, providing hundreds of millions of dollars for many who never bore a scar. You begrudge not old heroes their allowance, though you, the people, pay the charges out of the tariff. But what has been done for such as you, whose legs and arms are daily torn off, whose eyes are blasted in the terrible mills, for you who, with blistered hands, are forging the grandeur of cities, what have they provided, I say, for you, the unhonored soldiers of peace?"

Here, after much applause, some one bawled out an exclamation against the honesty of courts. Richardson, as to this charge, proceeded to defend them.

"If courts of justice are commonly found willfully wrong (and such I swear they are not in this land of ours), willfully wrong, I say, then you need seek no substitute, for government is gone, its material worn out, the source of good supply for any office exhausted. Judges are chosen from the best minds of a country and, if they be everywhere unfaithful, the country has rotted deep. Above all things, remember that the worst court that ever sat is better than a tyrant, because courts from their very nature will listen to argument, while the best tyrant in the world is by necessity the enemy of debate."

Another voice cried out that Richardson was like the rest of the lawyers, always protecting the judges.

"Put him out," called others, rising to eject the interrupter. "Out with him!" Dickson brought order about with a word or two. Labor, he said, was fortunate, since there must be courts, to have on its side a

lawyer and orator like John Richardson. The assembly became quiet after rousing applause.

Richardson then reviewed the decisions of the courts, condemning some of them as absurdly construing constitutions so as to make all legislation impossible on this subject, decisions the more provoking because they appeared to be solicitous of the laborer's point of view. Then he mildly rebuked, though he deemed it pardonable, the angry denunciation which some of the unions had hurled at judicial tribunals.

Again the noisy interrupter broke in, with several beside him, heartily upbraiding the speaker, which second vexation caused a tumult of resentment in the mass of the hearers and at last the ejection of the offenders from the hall. John, undisturbed, continued:

"The free Western fields which so long kept up your wages are nearly gone and the era so long dreaded is come at last. No longer can the workman, turning to the soil, make way for another at the mills and sluice the glut of hands. Taxation exclusively by tariff grows harder every day. Shall a certain rich woman, squatting on fifty million dollars in three or four rooms, pay nothing for national government except upon the trifle that she eats or the few gowns or dishes she may buy? The rich have no reason for national economy. On the contrary, they have every reason for national expense. They shift to the plain people the bulk of national taxation, while the tariff, under which they engage as manufacturers, filches the gains of the multitude with its stealthy and rapacious paw.

"Well may the rich extol battleships, incredible pensions, ship subsidies, armies, and wars. Let us have

these fine things if we will, but out of a federal income tax perhaps? Oh, no! Well, then, out of a federal inheritance tax. Not at all! Then by direct taxes on property. Oh, most unfair! No, on any such basis as this you will hear no more of all these ship subsidies and armies and battleships and wars."

In conclusion he fell again upon riches, which in this country, he said, were indifferent to civic virtue. He instanced with scorn the Sugar Trust's cheating at the customs scales, the stealing of city water by a Chicago packing-house with a secret pipe, the bribing of mayors, the resistance to wholesome laws.

"An aristocracy of wealth has succeeded the old aristocracy of blood, and the capitalist class, which helped us win our victories over kings, resent in you the very arguments they applaud in the mouths of their ancestors."

The address ended in great enthusiasm for the speaker. "That little gang on the left there," said Dickson to John, "were some of Locksport's hirelings. They're not even strike-breakers, only thugs. Our boys know them."

CHAPTER XXV

OUR habits are our masters, exacting more as we submit. Wallowell Severn was deeply annoyed at the possibility of his suffering the loss of Wattles, a clever knave who had never failed to answer his faintest wish and to serve him with the nicest pomp, so he was not long in sending for Kate to inquire the cause of this trouble between Nora and Wattles and to let her know that the maid must be dismissed at once.

He began, however, in fairly good humor, for that afternoon he was not suffering in his legs as much as usual. Even Locksport's arrest did not give him much uneasiness, because as has already been seen, he had no affection for this gentleman and was apprised that the latter had promptly given bail. The only effect of the information was to make him resolve to depart to Europe as early as possible. Criminal proceedings, he knew, become epidemic sometimes in communities and, though he had the most perfect confidence in his ability to defy the law and every court in Christendom, he feared the labor trouble might grow more acute and some lives be lost for which people like himself would be held responsible. Shortridge, with whom he had consulted as to the going abroad, had seemed to accede to it.

"What does Wattles say Nora said?" inquired Kate when her father began.

"Said she's generally impudent to him, impudent a long time."

"But you don't want me to discharge Nora, that I've had eight years, simply because she can't get along with that man Wattles?"

"That's exactly what I do mean. He's my man and a good one, and I don't propose to have him bothered with a saucy Irish maid."

"But you don't mean, do you, father, to let him have his own way and make you give whatever orders he fancies?"

"No, I don't. He knows me too well for that. What I want is that you give this girl a good talking to and find out what this row is about."

"Would you like to talk to her yourself?"

"No, I don't want to be bothered with her. I want you to talk to her and let me know at once some explanation of this thing, and if it isn't to my satisfaction she'll get out of the house to-morrow. I'm going to have the whole matter cleared up before we leave here for Europe. That reminds me—have you been getting ready?"

"Why, no. The fact is I haven't heard from you further about it."

"You didn't need to hear from me further. I don't see what's the reason you're so indifferent to going. I never found you this way before."

"I haven't heard anything from Miriam about her going, either."

"Well, judging by the terms you're on, I don't see that there's much reason for her communicating with you. She'll do what I say, and you can only presume that she'll do what I say. I guess I generally have

my way in this house, don't I, when I feel like it? Do you want any money to get ready with?"

"No, sir."

"Now, there's another thing. I cautioned Miriam not to say anything about this going away. I ought to have told you so at the outset, but I forgot about it, especially as it wasn't until perhaps to-day that I felt the matter ought to be left unmentioned. You had a lot of young women here yesterday. Did you tell them about it?"

"No, I didn't, father, because I didn't think that the matter was entirely settled yet."

"Well, we're going, but on the other hand, as I just said to you, I don't want anything said about it. A lot of these anarchists are making themselves smart by serving all kinds of papers and getting out all kinds of arrests against decent people like myself, and I guess I'll just fool them if they have anything of that kind up their sleeve against me."

Kate said nothing and looked away, for she suddenly remembered what she had said to Richardson.

"And speaking of anarchists and that sort of people," continued the father, "I want to be very frank with you, Kate, that I'm not in the best of humor with some of your notions on these subjects. I'm not going to get up another argument with you here and allow you to show your powers of debate. I just want to tell you you've been talking too much on the demagogic side of these questions to suit me. Now, that's all about that matter for the present. If you want any more money to get ready with, I'll give it to you, but I want you to get ready at once and make up your mind to that."

Thanking her father without much ado, she retired to her own apartments, where with no loss of time she called before her the faithful Nora.

"Nora, there's been some complaint made against you by Wattles—to father."

"Very good, mum."

"Well, what about it?"

"I don't know yet, mum, because you haven't said what it was."

"I don't know myself, Nora, but it's made a great impression on father. Have you had any words at all with Wattles lately?"

"Nothin', mum, but what might pass betwene a lady and a gintleman, a polite ixpression of opinion of wan concernin' the other."

"When?"

"Yisterday, mum, was the last wan."

"You've had several, then, have you?"

"Yes'm, an' I think ye've possibly heard me expriss me opinion to you about Mr. Wattles once in a while in the past two months."

"Never mind that, Nora. What was this last argument, or whatever you call it, about?"

"It's not for me to say, mum."

"But it is for you to say. Out with it!"

"Sure, mum, it's not for me to be repatin' disagreeable things even in silf-difense."

"Disagreeable things about whom? About Wattles?"

"No, mum, not about Mr. Wattles—though there's plenty of disagreeable things I could repate about him too, if I had a mind. But what I'm a talkin' about to ye's the disagreeable things that Mr. Wattles himself

said about some other people that needn't be mentioned. I'm quite sure, mum, ye'd be very much displeased with me if I repated what he said to me."

"Do you mean it was about me?"

"Now, there, mum, you'll be mad with me in a minute."

"Do you mean that Wattles said anything to you about me that you didn't like? Nora, I want you to tell me at once what occurred."

"Sure, mum, I don't want to be in the position of tryin' to injure any person, an' I'm not goin' to say a bad word whatever of Mr. Wattles, though he's nothin' but a low-lived spy, 'an' when it comes, Mr. Wattles,' says I to him, and just that way, mum, says I, 'when it comes to your intimatin' an' insinuatatin' things about me mistress that I've loved all these years—'"

"Well, go on."

"'Why,' says I, 'Mr. Wattles, I'd not be half dacent if I submitted to hearin' it.'"

Kate's feelings at this juncture may be easily imagined, for she began to reflect that some things which she had kept even from her devoted Nora were perhaps generally known.

"I want to hear the rest of this right now."

"Well, mum," resumed Nora, happy indeed to have this chance to let off steam, "what do you think the low blackguard said to me with his turned-up nose? He intimates to me that I was a-puttin' on airs, mum, an' him with more airs than would fill a castle, an' me only replyin' to his questions an' askin' if he had anything more to inquire. 'Oh,' says he, 'you don't need to put on so much style with me. You don't need to hold your head so high,' says he to me with that low

accent of his, an' then he sort o' falls to comparin' Mrs. Severn with you, mum. Do you hear me, mum—comparin' her with you! Why, as I said afterwards to Mrs. McFadden, 'Mrs. McFadden, if I wasn't here in a lady's kitchen like yours, I'd a slapped him all over the mouth,' an' Mrs. McFadden says to me—"

"Go on, Nora, tell me what happened to you and Wattles, what was said."

"Well, mum, as I was a-sayin' he was a-makin' comparisons between you an' Mrs. Severn, which bein' none of his business an' bein' done in an impident way, it put me in none o' the best o' humors, if I may say so, mum, though I held my temper as a young woman should under such a situation. All I did was to let him know what I thought of Mrs. Severn, if ye plaze, mum, him havin' made comparisons with you. An' thin what did he do, that cockney ape, but intimate to me, mum, that ye've been makin' acquaintances a thousand miles benathe your family—"

"Well, go on!"

"An' then he falls to reminiscences about the old country, a-tellin' me what people did under like circumstances with young men over there, and a-intimatin' that if this had happened in the old country—I don't mean to mention any names, mum, but poor Mr. Richardson here would a-been taken out by one o' them noble dukes' serving-men and be given a good beatin'."

"Did he say that?" inquired Kate, with slow, suppressed anger.

"Indade he did, the low villen, with his head in the air, too, all the time, mum, just like this!"

"That will do, Nora, that will do. I don't care to

hear any more just now. I'll excuse you. I'll send for you in a little while."

As Nora closed the door behind her, the poor young mistress sat down perplexed indeed. Anger against Wattles was mingled with an indefinable sense of humiliation.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE tears of youth resemble the rains of spring, for, though they give us gloomy days, they assure a fertile year. Kate Severn, reared to idle pleasure, was already a better woman because she was beginning to feel a degree of suffering and was the champion in her own heart of the weak against the strong. More in love than ever, she recalled a thousand times that first grasp of Richardson's hand, the pressure of which she still seemed to feel upon her own. Often, too, would her mind go back to the moment when she first saw him, to the moment when she turned her head and, turning, saw the man. No Fiammetta ever cherished flame more ardent.

Notwithstanding her father's injunction she began no preparation for the journey, being still in the hope that either she or her stepmother would be able to prevent it. As to the latter person, Kate on full reflection was satisfied that she would interpose excuses for delay. In some way or other, she reasoned, a week or two might be gained, and even that would be an age of pleasure to a girl in love.

As to her immediate trouble about Nora she was in considerable doubt. To discharge the girl was now the last thing in her mind, even though in refusing to do so, she should make a permanent quarrel with her father. It was Wattles himself that ought to be put

out of the house, but for that it would be impossible to offer the only reasonable pretext that existed.

Determined to avoid any further talk with her father that day, she was glad to find an excuse to take dinner at the Olcott's, from whose house she did not return until nearly nine o'clock. When she went to say good night to her father, she learned he was in conference with Shortridge and that the two were expecting Locksport. That the latter had been arrested she read in the evening newspapers with no small glee, but, the Severns receiving only journals in their own interest, she was ill pleased to see that Richardson's motives were laid to revenge and that his little home was under foreclosure. With indignation she perused a garbled account of his speech delivered that afternoon. Sentiments, that she was sure he never uttered, were put in raw language and scornful style, while an expression "fat and stupid beneficiaries of legislation" was by one impartial journal declared to be an insinuation against "one of our most esteemed citizens residing not far from his traducer."

Wishing to be alone, she dismissed Nora downstairs and, retiring to her rooms, lay down on a couch in a bay-window of her sitting-room without turning on the light. What her musings would have been the reader may easily guess. She had no time, however, to give herself up to meditation, for scarcely had she lain down when she heard under her window the name of Richardson.

"He's a low-lived hypocrite," said her father.

Raising her head, she could hear the voices more distinctly since they were only a yard distant and were uttered on the small veranda in front of her father's

upstairs sitting-room, which closely adjoined her own chambers. The night was warm, the air was still, and the conversation floated easily through her open window, so that if she continued to listen to it after hearing the name of her lover, she needed, we trust, the argument of no Liguori or other casuist to excuse her.

"Yes, a hypocrite. You're right, an infernal hypocrite," added Shortridge. "You read his speech, did you?"

"Yes, but I hardly ever more than glance at those things."

"Got a vile tongue," said Locksport. "Speaks of 'fat and stupid beneficiaries of legislation.' Fat and stupid!"

"Who was he driving at there?" asked Severn.

"Don't know," replied Shortridge.

"One of the papers said he meant you, Mr. Severn," Locksport observed indifferently.

"Me? 'Fat and stupid?' Oh, he's trying to make fun of my figure, is he? Why, the pup! I don't suppose anybody cares if I am stout. That was a great argument, wasn't it?"

"Well, he didn't make much out of me, either," Locksport went on. "I was bailed out in about fifteen seconds. Guess it made his crowd sick to see how quick I raised that money. Had a mob of millionaires down there falling over each other to put up the bond. He'll find what it is, the whelp, to attack a man of my standing. I'm glad you don't feel any uneasiness about yourself, Mr. Severn."

"Uneasiness!" Severn exclaimed with a laugh. "He knows better, the booby, than to get after me. Glad you put that foreclosure in motion against him."

"Yes, Shortridge and I were clear on that point. We forestalled him. Put him in the position of retaliating. Nothing goes worse with the American people than retaliation."

"And he'll lose his house for his smartness," added Severn, "and by the way, if you bid it in, you know, at a reduced rate and there's no redemption, I suppose I get the benefit of the bargain?"

"Sure! Make you a present of it! Yes, sir, you can just call that a little bouquet that I will send you."

"The thing I don't like, though, is the way Hagan's acted," said Shortridge.

"Don't know," replied Locksport. "He said the best thing for him to do was to be out of town and that Richardson wouldn't dare to take a step of that kind. But if he did, he'd call him off. All we wanted was just this week because those fellows are going to break up now. They can't fight any longer."

"No matter for that!" interrupted Severn. "Hagan's going to call this fellow Richardson off now, isn't he?"

"Sure!" interposed Shortridge.

"Oh, yes!" added Locksport. "I was talking with him by telephone, as I told you, talking with him at Meadville by long distance about four o'clock."

"And he said, did he," reiterated Severn, "that he'd put a stop to this infernal business, this cursed persecution?"

"Absolutely! Going to call Richardson off to-morrow."

"Well, we'll see now," Severn remarked. "I don't trust any of these politicians. That case ought to be

dismissed by to-morrow, and if Richardson won't dismiss it, why, he'll just have to be removed."

"Undoubtedly," said Shortridge. "Mayor Brown telephoned Hagan also, and I guess about six or eight of our principal bankers. The fact is, the line was just kept hot for a while. The funny part is, Richardson himself doesn't know where Hagan is. I've found Hagan true blue right down the line here now for years past, every office he filled."

"Yes," added Severn. "When are you going to get rid of this fellow Richardson once for all and for good?"

"The only way to break him for good, Mr. Severn," replied Shortridge, "is to smash his influence with his followers. Now we started in to-day, and the first thing we're going to do is to force him to dismiss this suit against Mr. Locksport here. The minute he dismisses it, then we'll dismiss our suit in foreclosure. Do you see?"

"No, not exactly," said Severn.

"He didn't attack Locksport, don't you see, until after Locksport's friends had started the foreclosure on him, and just as soon as we drop the foreclosure, he drops the prosecution. Can't argue against coincidences like that. It will keep him explaining the thing for a year."

"Shortridge suggested that," said Locksport, "and I think it's cursed clever."

"Not bad," chuckled Severn. "Shortridge'll be after another raise in salary."

"Oh, no, not yet," said Shortridge with a laugh. "Plenty of time for that. Now the next thing. We

decided to start in with a more vigorous policy here of stirring up public rows. This strike's been too peaceful. The public's getting in sympathy with those people. There ought to be disorders of some kind—rows in the streets—broken windows. Then we call in the police, have the hurry-up wagons running up and down the streets all the time. Then the people get tired of it. Of course, it's a rather ticklish sort of business, but still we have to act in self-defense sometimes, have to start these rows. The people always lay them to the strikers."

"If those fellows are not making rows," said Severn, "they're wanting to make them, so it's the same thing."

"We have the best man in the United States for that business, the best row organizer I ever knew," said Locksport. "Of course it means some broken heads. Rather ticklish business."

"I'm not supposed to know anything about it, you understand," observed Severn.

"I spoke to Maloney of the street car company, and he says he'll crowd the service down there towards the car works any day we want, so if there's a crowd gathering there, he can swell it fast. The police will follow, you know. I saw the chief about it a day or two ago. We'll just mass things for a rush fight and clean the crowd up. Then when the papers come out the next day, I think the public will cry quits on this business."

"I should think the chief would be entergetic," remarked Severn; "we keep him alive."

"Yes, that's so, but still he might bleed us a good deal," said Locksport.

"Another idea now. The chief says nearly all these fellows, like Richardson, have a record some way or other. Generally it's a woman."

"Well, has he got one?" asked Severn.

"No," replied Shortridge with a laugh, "but I guess we can get him one. The chief's just going to steer some handsome woman around him there, and we'll see how sweet and virtuous this young man is. All we have to do is to get him into a scandal of some kind and that'll kill him off in good style. The chief told me a good story of how that's been worked on a reform mayor out West. Worked perfectly. Ruined the fellow."

Kate could listen to no more. She rose up in horror and retreated to the interior of the room, covering her ears with her hands that she might not be a listener to so much infamy.

Are you surprised, reader, that eminent financiers should propose such villainy? Retire, anchorite, to your cave. You do not know your country.

"A stroke or two like that will stop all this talk of arresting leading people on all sides," resumed Shortridge.

"Arrest's the last thing I think about," Severn sneered.

"Oh, you've done nothing wrong, any way. They could only allege collusion."

"Collusion. That'd be like them! We're friends, ain't we? How can there be collusion between friends! Thank God, there's some law left in this country to protect men like me. But here's Mrs. Severn coming. We'll drop this subject, and you fellows finish this pup to-morrow."

The difference between an anarchist and your perfect individualist is this. The anarchist will have no laws at all. The individualist will have laws that protect him, but none to obey.

your per-
I have no
that pro-

May



lor

"It was perfectly plain that the step-mother was guilty."

CHAPTER XXVII

SHORTRIDGE remained that night at Severn's. It being very late when the conference broke up it was suggested by Mrs. Severn, who had joined the gentlemen about eleven, that it would be safer that he should stay rather than ride to town so late, now that there was so much disorder and those brutes in the Commonwealth Attorney's office were no longer willing to protect our best people.

It was half-past nine the next morning when Shortridge in the breakfast room was joined by his hostess. They nodded and smiled.

"Is he up?"

"I haven't heard any sounds from his room yet."

"I'll not wait for him."

"Have they given you a good breakfast?"

"First rate. Speaking again about his being arrested, I think we can prevent it, but there's no telling. Somehow or other the load is always put on men in my position. Now, coming back to this thing we were talking about last night, Kate's influence across the way. It seems to me it would serve your turn just as well if she did use her influence effectively with Richardson for the old man. She'd have to see Richardson more to do it and her father would be just as furious if it did him good as if it did him harm."

"I'll think it over, George."

"Another matter—this girl Nora. You were say-

ing last night that you were sure to get rid of her, Miriam, on account of this row with Wattles. I've been thinking that matter over, too, this morning, and I've made up my mind to keep shy of this house as long as that girl's in it. So if you wish to see as much of your humble servant as heretofore, you'd better get rid of her at once."

"It's no use, George, to go over this situation again. You needn't think I want that creature here a minute longer than I have to. You must remember Kate's influence with her father. If that fool housekeeper of mine wasn't sick and away so long, I could work the thing out better through her."

"There's two sides to that question," replied Shortridge, who, not being quite so much in love as the lady was, felt that a very valuable position was imperiled by his relations with her and was not disposed to take great risks. After further talk he took his leave.

Mrs. Severn had scarcely bade him good-by at the door when she had the ill-luck to pass Nora in the hall and to receive from that damsel so lofty a look of inaccessible virtue as put her beside herself with wrath. She immediately started upstairs to demand from Kate the insolent maid's discharge.

Kate, for her part, had risen late and had just sent down for her coffee. The poor girl had lain awake until nearly three o'clock in a variety of tormenting reflections upon the iniquity of what she had overheard, her duty to advise Richardson, and her duty to her father to say nothing at all. The conclusion she had reached was that as the possible arrest of her father was a thing they seemed to make light of on

the veranda, it became her to let Richardson know, at least in some degree, the rascally schemes to be set in motion against him. Of Hagan's action in particular he ought to be advised without an hour's delay. She was in this frame of mind when her stepmother entered the room, an honor somewhat unusual. Kate formally enough bade her good morning.

"There are two or three things, Kate," said Mrs. Severn, "that I should like to talk over here."

Kate nodded assent.

"First, about Europe. It doesn't matter where or how that came into your father's head, I, personally, don't care to go this time of year. Perhaps you have some objections yourself."

"I don't know."

"Well, I thought if it were so, and you had, it might influence your father in—"

"I have shown him that I don't care to go," replied Kate, "and I'm frank to say the same thing to you. He says, though, we've got to go—said so yesterday and told me to get ready at once. What have you said to him?"

"I was putting off a final talk with him, hoping certain things would change his mind, which it's possible they may."

"What, for instance?"

"The lawless way these strikers are acting, this arrest of Locksport—of course you know about that. It will be followed, some people say, by another high-handed outrage in the arrest of your father."

"Really?" replied Kate, but without excitement. "Father's done nothing wrong, has he? Probably he's not afraid."

"No, he's not afraid, of course, but it's disgraceful and disagreeable and, now, it's a delicate subject to talk with you about and you won't misunderstand my motives at all in mentioning it—"

"What is it, Mrs. Severn?"

"You've become acquainted—with this—this Mr. Richardson next door."

"Yes. Well."

"He's in control of the Commonwealth Attorney's office. I don't know whether you know that or not, but he's the one that arrested Locksport—" here she paused for a moment, but Kate made no comment, so she continued, "and he is the one, as I understand, that's liable to have your father arrested, too." Kate continuing silent, the stepmother proceeded.

"If anybody has any influence with that man, I think they ought to use it."

"Mrs. Severn," replied Kate, "I know exactly what you mean. I have no influence with Mr. Richardson that would be worth mentioning. I know him and like him, and I'm very, very sorry that things are as they are. As to influences, I think father and Mr. Locksport and Shortridge have abundant."

"Oh, very well! You take the position, do you, that there's no necessity of exerting whatever little influence you have?"

"I have nothing more to say."

"Now, there's another thing upon which I hope you will have something to say," resumed the older woman with warming temper. "Your maid. Your father has given you his decision in this matter and I suppose you've communicated it to her, have you?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"She's still here, isn't she?"

"I want to know, Kate, and I have a right to know, whether she is going to stay. That's what I mean and you know it."

"Here she is now."

Nora, who had just entered with a tray, made her way without remark to a small table, where she began to distribute the dishes.

"Nora," began Kate, "since you're here just at this moment, I might as well ask you a question or two."

"Yes'm."

"It's too bad that in addition to the complaints made here by Wattles, I have had to hear from time to time some reports from Mrs. Severn. I hope you've always been behaving yourself respectfully before her?"

"I surely have, mum."

"And if there's anything you've done that ought to be apologized for, I'm going to have you apologize for it now."

"Sorry a word or look, mum, that I have to apologize for, mum."

"I'm not here to have any argument with you," broke in Mrs. Severn, "but as mistress of this house, I'll let you know that you have an impudent way of passing me and looking at me, and if you didn't know it before, you know it now, that you've got to leave this house."

"I haven't heard that from Miss Kate yet, mum," at which remark very naturally Mrs. Severn's face grew redder than before.

"No, but you hear it from me, and you'll hear it from Mr. Severn too. I want to know, Miss Severn,

if you permit this animal here to argue with me in this house and before your face."

"An' if you please, mum, I'll be called no animal!"

"Nora!" cried Kate.

"An' I'm as good as the likes of you, Mrs. Severn!"

"Do you hear?" screamed Mrs. Severn. "Do you hear the—?" using a vile word. This last put Nora beyond all control, and it was in vain with gesture and words that Kate attempted to remonstrate and stop her mouth.

"Oh, ye call me that, do ye, mum? I dare ye to say it again! I'm a dacent woman, Mrs. Severn, an' that's more than you can say. Where were you last night? Ain't ye very sleepy the day? I can say a word or two this mornin', I think, that ye wouldn't like to hear."

Mrs. Severn, turning pale now, leaned against the table.

"You lie!" she said faintly and between set teeth. Kate for her part was speechless, for she knew that what before was vague was fast becoming terribly definite.

"I do, do I? Oh, I do, do I?" the maid exclaimed in triumph and anger. "Would ye look at this? would ye just put your eye on that? would ye be tellin' in whose room ye dropped this?" at the same time bringing forth from a pocket in her apron a small pearl pin to which was hanging a thin blue ribbon, an appendage undoubtedly of ladies' lingerie.

A white thing to look upon was Miriam Severn, gazing at the trinket in terror. The room was dead still. She tried to speak, then turned her head aside, first to one wall, then to another, sinking slowly into a chair.

"You—you stole this—you stole it from my room," she said faintly at last.

"That sounds fine, doesn't it? I've as good a witness as there is in this house to back me word, and God be praised, there's more than wan of us poor servants here that will try to kape the house dacent, an', if ye'll be charging me once more with thim words, I'll take this thing to your husband this minute."

The other raised her hand deprecatingly, with sunken head, however, a pitiable heap of humiliation. By this time Kate, pale and nervous, was able to command her tongue.

"Give that to me, Nora," she said. "Now leave the room."

It was perfectly plain that the stepmother was guilty. She could not raise her head.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THAT there was a deal of wickedness in the social circle in which she lived, Kate Severn well knew, but, as her mind was innocent, evil of that kind never seemed real. That certain wives were too gay, that some husbands paid too much attention to wives not their own was gossip which she may have believed, but from which, innocent girl, she inferred only a light degree of wrong. Now there sat before her a guilty woman, a woman with shame just fresh upon her. Instinctively shrinking back, Kate felt a greater loathing against vice because it was now beneath their roof and this creature a part of their family. What to say under these circumstances was beyond either her tact or her spirit, so it was some time before the other feebly broke the silence with her head only half raised:

"You—you don't—you don't believe that—do you?"

Kate, by this time almost overcome *herself*, had also sunk into a chair, her elbows upon her knees, her face buried in her hands.

"But you're not going to say anything—to say anything to him, to—to your father, are you?" Still no reply.

"I know you hate me, Kate. Maybe I deserve it—I don't know. I haven't been as kind as I might have been." Kate was still gazing stupidly on the floor.

"And Nora—you'll not let her tell this thing, will

you? You'll make her give that back to me, won't you?" Kate pitched the pin without a word to the other's feet, where it was eagerly picked up.

"But you can stop her—you will stop her from talking, too, won't you?"

"You have seen what a tongue and temper she has," Kate replied. "Judge for yourself. Oh, Miriam Severn! Miriam Severn!"

"I tell you that it's all false, Kate, it's all false, and they've prepared some cunning trick here against me and I know you'll not be a party to it."

Kate got up, wandered to another chair and sank down in that, too.

"Promise me that, Kate, won't you?"

"Mrs. Severn, can't that terrible man, that awful creature, be kept away from this house?"

"Of course he can, but he has to come on business. Kate, I'm going to Europe. I'll urge Wallowell to go at once to Europe. You don't say that you won't tell. For God's sake, you don't mean—"

"Oh, woman, be still! Give me time to think."

"But you won't? Tell me you won't!"

"I don't know what to say. Here in my father's house this terrible thing!"

"But it would be wicked and cruel to me to tell it!"

"It might be wicked and cruel to him to let him know it."

"Yes, yes, that's true, Kate, and wicked and cruel to him, Kate, too."

"I didn't say that I'd tell it, did I?"

"No, but you don't say, Kate, that you'll not tell it. Think of it! Would you ruin a woman's life? I'll promise never to see him again—never to let him come

in the door, if possible. Ask me to do anything for you, Kate—anything that you can name. I'll never cross you again in anything—no, on my soul, on my honor, I'll not. Why are you hesitating there? I'm a woman to be trusted, am I not? Why should my word be doubted this way?"

"Miriam Severn," began Kate slowly as she repressed a sad irony at the other's honor, "it isn't necessary for you to plead with me any more. My father has been good to me, and I'll save him from shame."

"You'll not tell, then?"

"No." There were a few moments of silence in which could be heard only the deep breathing of Mrs. Severn. She was the first to speak again:

"And Nora?"

"She must leave the house."

"But she'll talk even then."

"No, she'll not. She's never broken her word with me, and if she gives me the promise, you're safe."

"And who was the other one she was referring to, the witness, or something, she called it?"

"How do I know?"

"Good God, don't you know? The other may talk. I thought that you knew—I thought—I thought that it was a part, possibly, of a plan of yours and—"

"Oh!—you—you—ugh!"

"You must help me, Kate. We mustn't do this by halves. We'll work together in this, you and I. Find out who the other person is."

"Leave that to me, Mrs. Severn. I think I can take care of it all."

The older woman having by this time recovered somewhat of her composure and strength, was breath-

ing less desperately and, after a moment's silence, she added:

"I want you to know, Kate, that I appreciate this and of course I'm going to do what I can to show you that I do appreciate it."

"Thank you very much."

"Now there's a little matter of your own, Kate, that I know you don't want talked about." Kate looked at her, wondering what she meant.

"This acquaintance of yours, this person in the cottage here."

"Well?"

"I'll protect you fully with your father," Mrs. Severn continued with a delicate tone of charity and condescension that was exasperating to madness.

"Protect me?" cried Kate. "You protect me? Why, woman, what do you mean? I want no protection. Oh, oh!" The selfishness of her stepmother left her almost speechless. "Go, please!" she continued. "Leave the room. Whatever you do, just leave the room now, please."

"Now don't be angry, Kate."

"Angry? I couldn't be angry. I don't know, Miriam Severn, whether I'm alive or dead at this minute. Just leave me—leave me, that's all I ask. I tell you again, I'll never speak of this to any person and Nora will never speak of it either and will leave this house. As for me, you'll not be troubled with me long either, Mrs. Severn. I have a little inheritance from my mother, as you know—I'll take that and I can live somewhere else. The same roof can never cover you and me."

CHAPTER XXIX

IT had been the first desire of Kate, upon arising, to communicate in some way with Richardson regarding what she had heard last night, nor did she feel the least stricture in conscience as to her right to let him know at least a part of the scandalous things concocted. Her father's share she need not reveal. It would be enough to relate the devices themselves without perhaps mentioning the names even of Locksport and Shortridge.

She had very little time to lose. But how could she talk with him? His office she could not properly seek. Equally hazardous would it be to send a note. Even to ask for him over the telephone might be to reveal the secret to some listener in his office.

She had decided at last to telephone him from some public station only a hint or two with the request that they meet late in the afternoon at the pagoda, a device which, as it was agreeable to love, was speedily approved by discretion. The terrible scene with her stepmother now drove these intentions out of her mind and, when she had in part recovered, her first thought was to recall Nora in order to put the blabbing temper of the maid under control.

Such was the purity of her thoughts that when Nora reentered the room she was unable to look her in the face or to bring herself to discuss such actions as had

been revealed. The maid, for her part, busied herself with bustling about the room, setting in order first this and then that, herself confused and wondering what was coming.

"Nora," said Kate at length, "I have given her back that pin."

"Yes'm."

"Who was this other person you said was a witness or—"

"Olga."

"And what—what does Olga know?"

"She was a cleanin' his room, mum, and just happened to pick the thing up as I was goin' by the door. She shows it to me an' I says to her, says I, 'Just let me have that. It's a lady's.'"

"And what did Olga say?"

"Sure, thim Swedes niver say anything, mum."

"Did she say anything—do you think—she suspects—"

"No, mum, but about a month ago when Mr. Shortridge stayed in the house I think she did say, mum, something or other that I thought meant something then. But sure an' I hope, Miss Kate, you'll not be worryin' a minute on her account. Thim Scandinavians is too thick-skulled to see anything."

"Nora, will you promise me never to speak of this to a living soul?"

"Oh, far be it from me, mum, ever to minton it on this earth. Sure, an' I've never spoke to another person in the world about secrets. It's not for the likes of me, mum, to be talkin' about the people of the house, an' I never do. There's nothin' upstairs that's ever talked of by me downstairs, you may be sure of that,

mum, for that was the way I was brought up in a good family in the old country, mum, before I came here, and me mother, she says to me—”

“Just a minute, Nora, there’s something very serious now that you and I’ve got to talk about.”

“Yes’m.”

“Mrs. Severn is the mistress and head of this house.”

“Yes’m, I suppose so.”

“Hasn’t it occurred to you, Nora, that it is impossible for you to remain in this house after what you said to her?”

“Why, sure, mum, it’s not me that waits on her.”

“But just think a minute, now, Nora. This is her house so far as that’s concerned. It’s a sad business, Nora, but I’ve got to tell you that it’s utterly impossible for you to remain here.”

“Oh, would ye hear her!” wailed Nora, bursting instantaneously into a copious flood of tears. “Is it drivin’ me out of the house ye are? Oh, take back thim words, ye swate honey. Take thim back, take thim back! Sure, an’ ye don’t mean that to me. Ye don’t mean that to Nora!”

“It isn’t my desire, Nora. It’s necessity.” By this time the honest wench was on the floor at Kate’s feet, hugging her mistress’s knees.

“Sure, ye’ll not put me out of the house. Elephants couldn’t drag me out of here. Oh, I knew bad luck was comin’ to me! An’ don’t I remember comin’ over in the ship eight years ago that I heard the Banshee’s wail seven times and when nobody died they all laughed at me exceptin’ little Conn Mulligan from Tipperary, ‘an’ sure,’ an’ he says, ‘Nora, it would be better for you if somebody had died, for now ye’ll have bad luck for

twice seven years,' an' here after eight beautiful years with your swate self, his words are comin' true."

"Please don't talk this way, Nora."

"An' can I help it, do you suppose? Do ye suppose I'm made of stone to be turned out in the street this way an' lave the swatest crature in the world foriver—me that's treasured up every word an' look ye ever gave me—me that's got treasured up upstairs the little slipper ye wore the first night ye had yer ball when ye was just comin' out and bein' a lady—me that's kissed that slipper tin thousand times? An' do ye suppose I'll ever be happy a minute to know that any other girl's a layin' out yer night-gown at night an' puttin' yer little woolen slippers ready for ye under the bed?"

"Oh, Nora, don't you see you're making me cry? Can't you stop it?"

"Troth, it's me that's weepin' me life away here at yer feet—it's me that's the most miserable crature in the world this day!"

"Not more miserable than I am myself, Nora. Do you suppose that I want to stay here? How long do you suppose that I'm going to remain?"

"What's that?"

"If we don't go to Europe, Nora, I'm almost certain to go to Cousin Julia's or Aunt Emma's or God knows where—I don't care where."

"Oh, do ye hear her swate words? An' it's me that will be with ye ivery minute of the time. Ye couldn't shake me off. But sure, an' yer father'll not permit ye to be driven out of the house this way."

"It isn't for my father to say, Nora. It's for me to decide. I can't tell him what has happened—I can't

drag him down into shame—but I can't stay here either. Now get up—stop crying! I'll speak to Mrs. Severn about it and you can remain here two or three days and I'll form my own plans too."

With that she was able to rid herself of the loving creature, and feeling that valuable time had already been lost, she hurried to a suburban shop to telephone to Richardson.

CHAPTER XXX

WHILE these unhappy occurrences were taking place this Thursday morning at Severn's, Richardson was busy down town. On his desk he found a letter from the Smoky City Trust Company returning the interest cheque without other explanation than what he had surmised, that is to say that they had already sold the mortgage to a trust company in New York. He dropped the communication into a drawer with contempt. Then he despatched affairs and at ten o'clock went out to visit some of the offices in which a loan might readily be obtained, for he could not be happy a moment so long as a foreclosure was resting upon his property.

The Iron City Trust Company he found very much annoyed that they were unable to oblige him. They had been lending too freely lately and the directors had decided to curtail their mortgages. In point of fact, they were calling in money instead of letting it out. The Dollar Savings Bank also regretted that they could not make a loan just then upon a property so charming. At the Monongahela Loan Company he found a different explanation. Was Mr. Richardson not aware that Mr. Locksport was a heavy stockholder in their company? At the office of the Allegheny Valley Security Company he was reminded that Mr. Severn, a great friend of Mr. Locksport's, was one of their directors. At the Farmers' Trust Company they were

even more frank, for the managing vice-president reminded Richardson that he had read his speech of yesterday and felt that those who could talk of capital in this style had better get on without it. The manager would be untrue, he said, untrue to all the great interests that had made the name of Pittsburgh famous around the world, the great interests that had made its name synonymous with business stability and commercial honor, if either directly or indirectly he lent any aid or countenance to a gentleman holding such opinions. In fact, he seemed rather grieved that he had been approached.

Returning to his office before luncheon he found there Tom, who was expecting the arrival also of Dickson.

"That was a great speech of yours yesterday, John."

"I hope your people are satisfied with it."

"Oh, they like it, most of them, very well. All the leaders, of course, approve of it highly, but some of the men, you know, they think those little criticisms of the unions unnecessary. But you mustn't mind anything of that sort, John. We've got a hard lot of men to organize. All the ignorance of Europe has been poured in here and we have to have those men in it just the same as ourselves. A labor union's a sort of a little republic. The voters are all the time trying to pull down the men in office and the men on top often can't get on without concessions to fellows below."

"Dickson's satisfied, is he?"

"Dickson's always true to you, John, and true to me. The trouble with our unions is that they're not strong enough. If they were big and strong, like the locomotive engineers, they'd have the power to control the

members, to punish them when they don't act up to the principles of the order and to the common sense that's necessary in intercourse between capital and labor. It's because we're so weak that we sometimes seem too strong. Here's Dickson, now."

The latter, entering with two other labor leaders and exchanging the usual greetings of the morning, seemed to be in some hesitation as to how to begin, for he would look first at John and then at Tom, intimating finally to the latter that they might as well talk that matter over with his brother. This suggestion meeting with no response, he finally himself began.

"We're mightily pleased with everything, Mr. Richardson. We're going after this thing thoroughly. The boys are satisfied. They don't care what the outcome is, they know you're trying to do your duty."

"I never expected to please everybody," replied John, "but I'm satisfied to get the commendation of leaders."

"Well, that's the right spirit, Richardson," Dickson resumed, "and Locksport's getting out on bail doesn't worry us a bit. We expected he wouldn't be in confinement a minute. All we want to know is that the legal machinery's started and that it's going to be kept up."

"It certainly is so far as I am concerned, Dickson."

"Well, now, another matter. Maybe I'm a little too quick about it but the boys have had it in mind for some time. We're after somebody else here, Mr. Richardson."

"Is that so? Whom?"

"Well—well, you see it's nobody else than this damned old rascal of a Severn himself," Dickson

finally blurted out. "We don't like that man, not a bit. The fact is, we hate the sight of him—hate him worse than we do Locksport."

"Arrest Severn?" said John somewhat slowly, as his own situation began to dawn on him.

"Yes, Severn!" cried both Dickson and Tom.

Just at this moment Eddie, throwing open the door, inquired, "Mr. Richardson, there's somebody, a woman I guess, on line one there and she won't give her name, but she says she wants to talk to you. Shall I hook you up?"

"Oh, yes, I'll talk to her," said John, reaching at the same time for the telephone and placing the receiver at his ear.

"What? Who is it? Oh, Miss Severn?" He could not repress this ejaculation.

The labor men looked at each other in a queer fashion.

"Gentlemen," said John, "there's a person here who wishes to talk with me privately and I'll just step into another room," saying which, and not without a little embarrassment he would have given the world to conceal, he left them. Tom Richardson and Dickson exchanged glances somewhat uneasily, the others looked out of the window, and there was a dead silence until John Richardson came back.

CHAPTER XXXI

WHEN Richardson returned to the room he was not free from agitation. He had learned only a trifle, for Kate was afraid to extend the conversation at all both on account of the place where she was and the place where the message would be received. The most he had been able to make of her hurried communication was that he should refrain from any definite step until she could meet him at six o'clock at the pagoda. He was being deceived, she said, by people whom she had no doubt he was trusting and he was about to be led into a very embarrassing step. Her earnest manner, apparent even over the telephone, the urgency with which she desired to talk further with him and the very fact that she seemed to hurry to communicate with him by telephone, threw him into great perplexity, so he gave her at once a promise to meet her at six.

"You were suggesting the arrest of Severn, gentlemen," he said as he re-entered the room.

"Yes," said Dickson.

"Now of course you have the same legal right to arrest one man that you have another, providing you have the proper evidence."

"Well, we've got the evidence all right."

"Though of course we don't expect this office to stand on technicalities," added another.

"Oh, that depends on what you mean by techni-

calities, gentlemen," said Richardson. "It's a relative term, so to speak."

"Well, everybody knows that old Severn's as deep in the mud as Locksport is in the mire."

"Yes, that's true, but so far as this affair at the Western Steel Works is concerned, Locksport's the head of the institution, presumptively responsible for everything that goes on there, whereas old Severn is only a stockholder."

"And isn't bein' a stockholder bad enough? Ain't stockholders responsible for these things?"

"They're not responsible simply because they are stockholders, for although they are stockholders they may not know anything about it. I may be, for instance, or you, a stockholder in a concern a long way off and we wouldn't be responsible. We might not know anything about it."

"But it isn't away off, it's right here in town. Him an' Locksport's as thick as two thieves."

"I was only illustrating the principle of the law. What I mean," continued John, "is that simply because a man's a stockholder in a company the law does not presume that he's responsible for the company's actions. The directors of the company are the people that are responsible."

"I think I see that clear enough," said Dickson.

"Well, it isn't clear to me," said the man; "there always seems to be some damned way or other where these people can dodge the responsibility. But what do you think about it, Mr. Richardson?"

"Why, it's a question of evidence, gentlemen. If you show that this man Severn is not only a stockholder but is actually conferring with Mr. Locksport

and has aided him to take these steps and helped him and in a manner directed him and encouraged him and in every way participated in the design of keeping these men prisoners there, why, that's a case, if, of course, you have the witnesses to swear that he is in that relation to Locksport."

"Well," said Dickson, "we've got men to swear that Locksport's over to Severn's house every night of his life. That's the first thing."

"And," added Tom, "his lawyer, Shortridge, is with Locksport all the time, too."

"This Shortridge," added the third man, "bein' more than a lawyer and a confidential adviser of old Severn, out at his house every night, spendin' nearly all his time there. Some people say, in love with Severn's daughter, for that matter."

"Well, what else, gentlemen?" John asked, a little annoyed.

"Why, that all the directors in Locksport's company are directors in banks that Severn's the principal stockholder in, and Severn's the largest stockholder in Locksport's company outside of Locksport himself, and Locksport and Severn elect the board of trustees every time."

"But," said John, "maybe Locksport has stock enough himself to elect his own board without Severn. Hasn't he?"

"We don't know anything about that, but we know they're the two big stockholders and the directors do just what they say. Then this man Severn's quoted in the newspapers as saying that he thought everything that Locksport done down there was just right."

"There's something in that," said John, "but of

course you must prove that he said that to the reporter."

"Oh, confound these technicalities! They wear me out," retorted the man.

"Of course I think it's being a little technical myself, but then Richardson knows," Dickson observed.

"Now, gentlemen," John summed up, "you have a right to arrest Mr. Severn when you have the proper witnesses for this office to proceed with. I think he knows all about it myself, haven't a doubt about that fact at all, but it's another thing in a court of justice to prove it against a man who may deny it from A to Z. He's been laid up at his house I—I—I believe, with rheumatism awhile, and, though you prove that these men go out to see him, maybe you'll hear them swear that they don't talk business there at all. In Locksport's case the situation was entirely different. He is the president and largest stockholder of the company and a member of the board. It is presumed right at the start that he has authorized as well as approved all these actions. He has got to explain. But, to make a short story of this, I will consider Severn further while you bring me more definite information about actual steps he has taken. Connect him more closely to Locksport in this business. It seems to me that with ordinary investigation here, and detective service, you could put this thing in such a light that this office will be fully justified in proceeding."

After further talk of this sort they departed, not, however, in the best mood toward Richardson, for they felt now that they had to do with him in a situation where his mind was not free.

Left alone again Richardson fell to speculating upon Kate's urgent telephoning. She had wished to deter him from what?

"Say, Mr. Richardson," cried Eddie, rushing into the room at this minute, "long distance wants you—Meadville—seems to be in a great rush." John took the receiver and it was some moments before with the aid of Eddie he was connected with Meadville. The voice at the other end seemed familiar.

"Who is this?"

"It's me—Hagan."

"Oh, Hagan! Didn't know you were at Meadville. Well?"

"My God, John, what have you been doing? I didn't imagine you'd take any such step as arresting a man like Locksport without consulting me."

"Why, Hagan, how could we consult you? You left no address."

"Then, why didn't you wait, John, until I returned?"

"Because legal proof, Hagan, was submitted here. The thing is an outrage. The whole town knows it and these people had a right to the arrest."

"But it was a matter of tremendous importance—testing a great public question here, with men of the highest influence and capital on the other side."

"Well, Hagan, I'm sorry if it has annoyed you, but I've done my duty, that's all."

"Of course you've done your duty, John, nobody doubts that. You wouldn't be in my office if I didn't know you were the finest fellow on earth. I'm not scolding you a bit about it but the thing could have waited a couple of days till my return. You knew

I wouldn't be away very long without leaving some address. I had a bit of private business up here I wanted to handle without anybody's bothering me and it wouldn't have taken me more than a day or two more."

"That, of course, I didn't know, Hagan."

"I don't blame you a bit, John—don't blame you a bit. I know you were doing your duty though I think you were a little too hasty. Now you've got me, old man, into one devil of a scrape. These men have been my friends for years. I'll do my duty and punish them if they deserve it, but of course when a thing of this kind starts in my office it ought to have my deliberate sanction or not go out at all. Why, that man Locksport's been the friend of my life in this town. I'm frank to say to you right now, over the wire here, I practically owe half of what I've got to him. Of course that's no reason why he should escape punishment for any wrong doing, but it does make it necessary for me, before my office grabs him by the neck, to investigate matters long, patiently and fully, and that's what I'm going to do now. I'm willing to have the man punished. I don't want you, John, to misunderstand me."

"Of course, when you return, Hagan, you have the right to take this case in hand yourself. It doesn't belong to me. I only started it as an act of duty and obligation to those that demanded it."

"Oh, I understand that all right, but I may be here several days and meantime that man's under a cloud—one of the best friends I ever had in my life, as generous a fellow as ever lived. Now, John, what I'm telephoning to you about is this, that case has got to be

dismissed at once. It can be started over again if it has to be and I'll do it, but it's got to be dismissed at once."

"Dismissed?"

"Yes, dismissed! that's it, right now. You've got to dismiss it right at once and I'll take the full blame and the responsibility. You've got to dismiss it, John."

"But, Hagan, think of the position you're going to put me in."

"No position at all. You're a subordinate, John—I don't mean that unkindly, but the world doesn't hold you accountable for my action. I'm telegraphing to two or three of the evening papers that you're taking this step by absolute command."

"That, of course you have the right to give, and it relieves me."

"But what I want is, while I'm telegraphing down there you go out there at once and dismiss this writ and quash the whole damned thing. I give you my word of honor that as soon as I come back, which will be in three or four days, I'll take this matter up and I'll have Locksport and all creation arrested if they have a right to it—I mean, the other side have a right to it."

"You're telegraphing now, you say?"

"Yes, this minute. Got all the wires made up—read you one right now. 'Daily Leader, Pittsburgh. Having this moment heard of the arrest of Mr. Locksport under writ from our office, I hasten to inform the public through your medium that this action has been taken without advice from me and that I have this day caused Mr. Richardson, my chief assistant,

to quash the proceedings at once. I take all responsibility for this step myself. Under the extraordinary circumstances of the whole affair at the Western Steel Works, the arrest of Mr. Locksport without the fullest examination of the facts and the practical concurrence of my entire force would be an act of injustice, as an attempt on our part to decide between the guilt and innocence of the relative parties.' "

"This is your office," said John.

"Yes, and I'm sending one or two other things of the same kind to other papers. Now you'll dismiss that, will you, John, right now?"

"I'll dismiss it, Hagan."

"All right. Good-by."

CHAPTER XXXII

THE shrewd Hagan knew well what he had to depend upon in John Richardson. The latter, incapable of deceit, was instinctively trusting, a quality which in his intercourse with strangers he had tempered with proper circumspection, but which in his relations with those who had been good to him was liable to imposition. Among all the successful politicians of what was called "the machine," Hagan alone had given Richardson encouragement, and the appointment he had bestowed seemed as much an act of friendship as a recognition of influence. Richardson had known him since he was a boy, and, several years younger, had always looked up to him as a man who carried it fair with associates, for Hagan, though a politician and not always scrupulous, bore a very respectable name, being an attractive fellow by reason of liberality with money, sweet temper in the office, and a kindly willingness to let subordinates rise.

John knew, too, that the dismissal, though annoying to himself, would not be final or fatal, as the arrest could be promptly repeated, while to refuse to act now unless Hagan should put the order in writing, would be an insult. He immediately called to his desk a stenographer and one of the younger lawyers.

"Go at once and enter a dismissal of the charges against Locksport and hand to the afternoon papers,

three at least of them, the statement that I am going to dictate."

He then prepared a short announcement to the public that, being instructed through telephone from Meadville, he had been at the command of Hagan required to enter a dismissal of the charges against Locksport until Hagan's return. Mr. Hagan's announcement to the same effect would, he said, be added in the evening or morning papers.

It being now time for luncheon, Richardson repaired to a restaurant hard by, where he consumed his meal in a very unamiable mind. Indeed, he almost wished he had disobeyed his superior, and, had the latter been at all near his own age, he undoubtedly would have taken it upon him to do so. Upon reflection, though, he felt satisfied that what he had done was right. Hagan was not only the head of the office but much older and better known in those circles in which, after all, influence seemed at present to be determined. Richardson, bold though he was, realized that he himself was regarded by what is called the conservative element of the city as a fledgeling who must yet submit to a considerable trial.

Returning to the office he exchanged a few words with Mr. Simmons, who seemed to be in rather good humor over the step forced upon the Assistant Commonwealth Attorney. Richardson, saying nothing, applied himself to the study of the cases that he had in hand until it was half past three o'clock.

The news was all over town and, the evening papers issuing early editions, very little else was talked of on the street. The proceedings against Locksport had been quashed.

Tom Richardson was the first to come in with one of the journals.

"Why—why, what's this? What's wrong here, John?" he cried, pointing to a headline which stretched from one side of the page to the other.

"You see for yourself, Tom."

"But why? What does it all mean? What in the name of God is wrong?"

"My statement's there, I suppose, that Hagan commanded me to do so."

"One of the papers says so, but only one. What did you do it for, anyway? Why didn't you make Hagan do it himself if he insisted on it? What proof have you got from him?"

"He called me up by telephone this morning just before noon and after you people left here."

"Where was he and what did he say?"

"Meadville."

"Well, but didn't you tell him to come down here and do it himself?"

"No, I hadn't any right to treat him that way. He talked to me plainly and fairly over the telephone. Said that if this thing was necessary to be done, he'd do it himself. He's twenty years older than I am and has been in office eight or ten, and my duty was to obey orders. I didn't like to do it, but I obeyed orders, Tom."

"But who's to take the blame of this?"

"He is, Tom. He said so himself, read me the telegram he was sending to three or four of the papers here."

Tom was silent for some time, leaning his head on his hand and finally saying:

"Well, I haven't seen the telegram yet from Hagan."

John looked annoyed, but replied, "It will be in the later edition, no doubt about that, Tom. He read it off to me word by word. He takes the whole blame, commands me to dismiss the proceedings and he comes out before the public with it. That was all that concerned me and my duty."

Tom seemed to be struggling to say something which at the same time he was endeavoring to keep within his lips and while the brothers were in this position, Eddie entered with flushed face to lay upon John's table a later edition of one of the newspapers. The loyal little fellow, though he looked troubled, said nothing as he went out of the room, while John Richardson picked up the sheet. He dropped it instantly with a sudden exclamation.

"What's the matter?" inquired Tom.

His brother passed him the journal without comment, apparently too much bewildered for words, whereupon they both read the headlines as follows:

"QUEER COINCIDENCE.

FORECLOSURE AGAINST RICHARDSON DIS-
MISSED.

LOCKSPORT PROCEEDINGS QUASHED BY
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

"What infernal lie is this?" exclaimed John Richardson at last, while Tom, who had arisen, was pacing the floor utterly unable to say anything.

"Tom, perhaps you and the other men raised the money to pay this mortgage?"

"No, John. Where in the name of God would we get the money to pay anything. I was just hoping that you had raised the money yourself. Do you mean, John, that it isn't you that's paid it off?"

"No, I've paid nothing on it yet. Couldn't raise the money."

"Why, then it's some mistake. It must be," said Tom. "Call up those lawyers and find out about it at once."

In a moment Richardson was telephoning to the counsel for complainant, but he soon dropped the receiver with a mystified countenance.

"He says they were ordered to dismiss suit about one o'clock to-day and did so immediately. That's all they know about it."

"Well, it's some of your friends, I suppose, John, that have paid it off, but what worries me is what some people are going to say about this cursed coincidence, as that God-forsaken newspaper says."

"Yes, Tom, there is something in just what you say, but Hagan's statement will set those things at rest. Now let's be cool about this thing and not lose our heads. An honest man can't be downed by slander and I've got a good many years of honest record in this community, so just don't worry about this, Tom, any more. That's right, sit down now, and let's talk over some things here. You were annoyed, Tom, weren't you, when I happened to ejaculate Miss Severn's name at the telephone this morning?"

Tom replied only with a gesture.

"Oh, I'm willing to take the subject up with you now, Tom. I've been thinking it all over seriously. That's a—that's a magnificent girl, Tom, but you're

right. You just said what was correct the other day and I want to admit it. It's all too far away for me." Here his voice becoming slightly tremulous, Tom in silence took his hand.

"Well, no matter about that, Tom. We all get over these little things and I'm not so hard hit, you know. She's the finest girl I ever saw and full of sympathy for just such people as you've given your life to. Well, I'll not talk about it any more, Tom. I've found the right woman—but I found her in the wrong place. It's got to stop, no doubt about it, put your mind at rest about that. I'm to see her at six o'clock this evening and for the last time. The reason that I want to see her now is that she's asked me to meet her again about something that she has to tell me. It was about that she was hurrying the word to me to-day."

"I hope so," said Tom slowly, "but of course it came in at the very worst time it could, you know, us talking about arresting her father."

"Yes, yes, that's true, but she knows nothing of that. She wanted to warn me against a certain person. She said a certain person was going to go back on me, or words to that effect, and that I am going to be deceived by somebody that I was trusting. She couldn't say more, but she said she could tell me a great deal this evening."

Tom, looking up suddenly, exclaimed "Hagan!"

"No, now let that go. Don't suspect a man and accuse him before he's done wrong. His telegrams probably came too late for to-night's papers and it's all right to-morrow morning, Tom. Just tell the boys how it occurred, tell them about the telephone message and that it will be made clear to-morrow morning and

we'll have that fellow Locksport arrested again if Hagan doesn't take the step himself. Have you seen any of them already?"

"Have I *seen* 'em? Excepting Dickson they're all half-crazy. Wanted to come up here and raise a row, I guess, but I kept 'em back, Dickson helping. That statement of yours did something, but this telephoning you from Severn's house, that foreclosure dismissal and all this talk about selling the property to the old man coming along with dismissing the charges against Locksport—why, John, it makes a pretty bad mess, that's all I've got to say."

Here they were interrupted by honest Totten.

"Too bad, too bad you had to dismiss that case, but what can't be helped can't be. Up and at 'em again is my maxim—"

"Thank you, Mr. Totten. Take a seat," said John.

"No, I've only got a minute or two before taking the train to Johnstown for a day or two. Thought I ought to step in and cheer you up."

"Badly misunderstood, I'm afraid," observed John wearily.

"Oh, yes, yes! People will say the wrong thing, but a man's friends have to come out then stronger than ever, you know, stronger than ever. Good-by for a day or two."

"Come, Tom, come. There's an old hero! Come with me and go home for dinner, it's growing late—and don't worry any more."

Persuading the frail brother to accompany him, Richardson took the electric car and was soon at his little home.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE world would rather explain your failure by a general weakness than by a particular error. While people down town discussed the events of the day in no friendly humor towards Richardson, the general tendency was to say that he had undertaken something which he had not the nerve to carry out. Some said he didn't know the law, others that he didn't know the facts, a third group that he simply wanted to show himself off, a fourth that he was never fitted for the position he was in and never should have been appointed. These were the various opinions as well among the rabble as among the bankers. In poor spirits from such accumulated causes and mystified particularly about the dismissal of the foreclosure, Richardson was nevertheless a man not easily crushed, so, though he felt that he would be accused of cowardice, the most disagreeable of all charges, he was able to cheer his brother and his mother with predictions that he would soon be as much in favor as ever he had been.

It was now time to keep his appointment with Kate, regarding his intercourse with whom in the future he had made up his mind. What he had said to his brother about breaking off this acquaintance he really meant.

Punctually was the appointment kept by both. Watching from his porch, Richardson did not start to

the pagoda until he could see Kate also on her way through clumps of bushes to the trysting-place, and, when he preceded her there, he was immediately struck by her appearance. A light-hearted look had gone out of her face, where trouble was beginning to write its cruel lines. She had a hurried manner, and for the first time in her life an anxious air. The infamous schemes she had overheard, the dishonorable disclosures of the morning, the necessity she felt under of leaving sooner or later her father's home rather than endure a degrading and irritating companionship, all these, united to the troubles of the man whom she loved and to whom she could not reveal all that she ought to tell, imposed both worry and sadness.

"You—you look very much troubled."

"I am afraid I am troubled, Mr. Richardson. I want to tell you something. I—I—want to—"

"Better sit down here."

"Yes—yes, but only for a minute. I feel terribly hurried. We're to have an entertainment to-night and I'm sorry to say I'm not—not at all in a condition to attend it. There's something—something I have to tell you."

"Yes, Miss Severn."

"I scarcely know how to—to begin."

"Yes, I know just what you mean, Miss Severn, and I'll spare you the trouble of telling it to me. It's about me, isn't it?"

"Partly—partly not."

"Miss Severn, I—I want to be frank. I want to tell you something I ought to have been telling you. I am older than you, not many years, of course, but I have much more in experience of the world. I

shouldn't have been having this acquaintance with you. It couldn't do you any good. I know your father has at last interfered."

"Oh, no, not that. No, you mistake. That isn't the trouble."

Looking relieved in spite of himself, John continued: "Yes, but it will be. It will be the trouble soon. All this can only be harmful to you."

"Oh, don't let's talk about that, please. It isn't necessary to talk about anything of that sort. Something very sad has happened in our house—something I can't tell you about."

"I thought you wanted to tell me about it."

"Oh, no, not that. It's still another thing. It's something I overheard—something maybe I shouldn't have listened to, but I did listen to and I think—I know—I ought to tell you about, though I don't think I can tell everything that I heard. I do want you to feel that I'm not an eavesdropper. I almost feel like one, but it was in my father's house and I stumbled on it only by accident. It concerns you and—don't ask me who—whom I heard, but I heard it."

Then with halting words and eyes cast down, omitting only the unclean scheme about the woman, she told him the greater part. Richardson, thanking her tenderly at each pause in her revelations, was equally moved by love and incensed by indignation. Every accent of the girl disclosed to him that her agitation on his account was intense. She told him how much she had wished to come to his very office at once, how much she had longed to write a note, how much even over the telephone she had desired to tell him all and, when from John's lips she now heard that

already her information came too late, her disappointment was obvious.

"Surely it will not ruin you, all this," she cried, "and to think—to think that they're trying to take even that away from you," pointing at the same time to the cottage.

"Trust me to protect that," John replied. "I'm not worrying about that. It's only the publicity that makes it annoying. There's plenty of time to save the little house." He could not take his eyes off her, so lovely did the girl appear in this new aspect of her character, but he was able to impose an iron control upon his feelings.

"When are you going to—abroad—to Europe?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know, Mr. Richardson. The other matter that I didn't tell you about will affect every plan that I had. I told you before, you know, that I didn't want to go, and now this other thing."

"Of course I have no right, Miss Severn, to ask about any other secrets you have, but you've aroused my curiosity just a little."

"Well, I can't tell you, I really can't, but what I have in mind is this and I suppose I can say it, that I don't believe I can live in the house with my stepmother any more. You know, we don't get on very well together—never did, and it all came to a head this morning between us."

The stepmother being one of the family who did know of the acquaintance between these two, Richardson could not help suspecting that some words between her and Kate had been occasioned by it. However, he was not able to inquire further with propriety,

while the girl with her head aside looked in deep trouble across the river. He felt obliged, for his part, to relieve her of any embarrassment whatever.

"Miss Severn, I have to come back to the subject and say what I said before, that I must be a source of trouble to you. I—I don't know just why it was that you and I seemed to—rather like to talk with each other, but of course I began to feel a little while ago—well, almost immediately—that with all the differences of wealth here, the tremendous difference in our friends and associates, and these doctrines of mine and my poor brother's, anything like a frank, open acquaintance, that is to say an acquaintance, one might express it, in the regular way, is out of the question."

She hung her head, but made a little gesture as if to stay him. Conquering a mighty impulse to seize her hand, Richardson went on.

"Now, there's to-morrow. It's Friday, you know, and we were to have that walk together again. I thought about that. It won't do, will it? Don't answer me. I know it won't do."

Poor Kate yielded to a slight, tremulous shrug of the shoulders, a trifling petulance and the faintest air of being hurt, but he happened not to see it, for he was looking sadly at the ground. It was a little protest of hers against fate rather than against him.

"I must go now," she said, and they rose together, each wishing to speak and yet not knowing what to say. He held out his right hand, which she slowly filled with hers. Then he held out the left hand, and she, looking down, gave him the other, too. He pressed them slightly until, in spite of herself, she ventured to raise her eyes. With one deep, one part-

ing look, he turned his back and hastily departed. She, knowing what was in his mind, that he was too strong and too honorable to declare it, retraced her steps to her father's mansion. With unwilling heart she would often pause, often turn the loving head, as if to go back to the sweet spot behind, repining under the firmness, while she respected the decision, of her lover. Devoted now to one whom her father would have taught her to despise, she was indeed the daughter of another Capulet whose only love had sprung from her only hate.

CHAPTER XXXIV

OH, that Asmodeus could have peered this unhappy day through the roof of Severn! Oh, for his gibes and grins as he would have chuckled to Don Cleofas over the mockery of happiness in the house of riches. The wrangling servants, the saddened daughter, the deceitful lawyer, the grumbling father, the unfaithful wife quaking at exposure, all, all, summed up the vanity of wealth.

Mysterious now was the whispering among the servants, those who gaped to know receiving eagerly a hint or word from those that pretended to know, the cause of Nora's red eyes, Miss Kate's altered looks, and, above all, Mrs. Severn's taking herself to bed at eleven in the morning with a sudden headache and rumored hysterics. Wattles, supreme in gravity and supposed to hold the key to all the secrets, would impart even to the second butler only an elevation of the eyebrows and a compression of the lips.

That the mistress of the house would not be able to receive the guests that night became plain by luncheon, when Peter Pangloss Smith declared to her irritated spouse that her leaving her bed would be a rash act for which, as the family medical adviser, he begged in advance to be held not responsible. Mrs. Severn, he reminded him, was a woman of exceptionally delicate nervous organization. In fact, he had never met a lady in whom the sympathetic part of the nervous

system lay so near the surface, so bare to external irritation, so easily jangled, so slow to recomposure.

As for this lady, such spirit as she had been able to rally on leaving Kate's boudoir suffered in a moment the violent reaction natural to what she had just passed through and what she had yet to fear. Bad herself, she would not trust the promises even of Kate about secrecy. What, then, must she apprehend from the loose-mouthed maid? Hating the servant who had discovered her wickedness and hating still more the generous stepdaughter who was willing to shield her, she vented her first rage on her own maid, tore off her outer garments, and, flinging herself on her bed, cried out for Dr. Smith, while she fairly screamed at the girl's delay in unlacing her shoes.

The maid, who had never heard, even in the best families of New York, so many bad words of a sudden, had the good sense to give her mistress something from a bottle which, always kept in the closet, contained one of Dr. Smith's favorite prescriptions, with an odor singularly resembling that of medicines prescribed where the sale of whiskey has been forbidden by law. Then she offered a cup of strong tea, which the mistress spurned because a drop had been splashed on the saucer, a sight, she cried, that the stupid creature ought to have known no refined woman could stand. Equally was she in rage because the girl, having taken off the shoes, had failed to carry them out of the room. "Do you suppose a nice woman like me wants her shoes in the room with the warmth of the feet still in them? What kind of a training have you had, you blockhead?" It was an hour before Dr. Smith arrived and ended all this commotion,

such are the wonders of science, with the point of a little needle.

The receiving of the guests devolving upon Kate, she was far from a genial hostess, depressed by her parting with Richardson no less than by the shame that lay upstairs and seemed to blacken every wall in the house. Her appearance from little sleep the night before did not escape notice, for, if we might adapt the great poet's line, care sat on her blooming cheek. In her mind was the resolution that she would not live longer under the roof of Miriam Severn, a purpose itself sufficient to disturb her deeply, since it would involve trouble with her father without adequate explanation.

Over the hedge the Richardsons ate their dinner in silence, nor did Tom remain long afterwards. The mother, much worried, went early to bed. John, lingering till midnight over some books on which he could ill fix his thoughts, lay down at last to sleep after an unhappy glance at the great house, its lights of revelry, and its music of joy.

CHAPTER XXXV

IT was a card party at the Severns' that night and the game ran high. By eleven o'clock bridge had given way at most of the tables to poker, and tiny fortunes had been won and lost when a pause was announced for refreshments. Old Severn, delighted at the repulse of the labor element in the dismissal of the proceedings against Locksport, beamed while he waddled from guest to guest. "Fill these glasses again, Dobbins," he would say.

"I raise you twenty," cried one of the ladies.

"Coming back at me, eh? Tenth Commandment, 'Do unto others,' and so forth."

"You silly thing, that isn't a Commandment!"

"Bet you it is! God, what nerve on your hand!" responded one of the gentlemen.

"'Tis not a Commandment.—Mrs. G. over there is getting full earlier than usual.—The Commandments are all about adultery."

"Get a prayer-book and see. I see your twenty and raise it back."

"Bet you there's not a prayer-book in the house."

"You don't know how many Commandments there are, anyway."

"Of course I do," said she. "There's twelve, you stupid. Stop that! There's money on this game. You've got to play according to rule."

"Well, I'd like to make a bet with you on that Commandment."

"Get a Bible, somebody, and let's look this thing up."

"Oh, take your old money and keep it! Suppose you heard Eddie Thomson's just made a million on that stock."

"Needs it. Have peace now with that wife."

"Say, rotten champagne, isn't it? Thought Severn had better taste. By the way, I got some bully stuff the other day, only fifteen a bot! Finest vintage!"

"Well, go on and play. Mrs. Glendenning's out for another divorce. Wonder what her November name'll be! Oh, how do you do, Mr. Severn? A lovely evening. Nice wine. Yes, another glass, thank you. I'm feeling fine."

"Everybody's feeling gay," said Severn; "makes me feel like a boy."

"Sure! I'm poetical, Mr. Severn. 'The harp that once thro' Tara's halls,' or something like that—"

"Oh, go on and play," interrupted his partner; "nobody quotes old authors nowadays."

"No," dryly observed Kate, who had sauntered to that table, "we only buy them." She was pale and tired, but was concealing her nervousness.

"Not bad! Good! I bought about ten yards of books myself the other day."

"Here's Small. Hello, Small! When did you arrive?"

"Some time ago. Been at one of the other tables. How are you, here?"

"Feeling fine. How's the tariff? Everything good over at Washington?"

"I think so. Big navy appropriation. Large pension bill proposed."

"Pension!" cried one of the ladies. "What in the world have we got to do with pensions?"

"The more money that's spent, the more need for tariff," replied the statesman. "Isn't that so, Mr. Severn?"

"Looks that way to me," Severn answered. "Shame the way people attack those pensions. I believe in the old soldiers."

"Me, too."

"I suppose they'll be after another income tax this session," remarked one of the gentlemen. "Telling us we owe it to our country to chip in. Bleedin' us all the time."

"I'd like to know what our country ever did for us," said Severn, the owner of forty millions. "It's taxes, taxes, taxes all the time. Looks as if some of us would have to live in Europe, but let's draw our chairs around here and have a bite to eat, half a dozen of us. Oh, how d'ye do, Mr. Locksport?"

"Poor old Locksport! By Jove, that was a shame, old man!"

"Draw your chair in here, Locksport. They didn't have you penned up more than three seconds, did they?"

"Not on your life!"

"How's Mrs. Locksport to-night? Heard about that operation."

"Very much better, thank you. Very much indeed! I had a devil of a time of it. You know, she would have nobody operate on her except McGonegal of Chicago. To get him here quick, I had him brought on

a special train you probably read about. By the way, somewhere in Indiana they were going about eighty miles an hour when some infernal woman crossed the track, crossed in the night, do you hear? Got hit, of course, and my train had to stop. Killed her, naturally, at that speed. Do you know, the train was detained there two hours and my wife sick here in Pittsburgh. Who was paying for that train, I'd like to know? McGonegal even wanted to go back there and do something for the woman that was hit. I'd like to know what she was doing there on the track. Who was paying the railroad? Who was paying McGonegal, me or her, I'd like to know? You know, I didn't quite like that in McGonegal."

"Why, the delay might have cost Mrs. Locksport her life," observed Severn.

"Yes, and it damned near did cost her her life, if you'll excuse me saying it that way, ladies. The railroad's bill for the train was twenty-five hundred dollars. I say again, I'd like to know who had a right on the track there except me?"

"The country's getting into bad shape. Everybody's afraid of what they call the people," continued Locksport. "Everybody's wanting more pay, more wages, all the time. Seems as if they want to get everything away from us."

"I should say so," another added. "Last Christmas I just heard in time that my clerks were all going to ask me for an increase. They thought I was going to be in town that Christmas, and I just simply got out of the city—headed 'em off, so to speak."

At this point Kate left them and, mingling with the guests, came suddenly upon Shortridge. She bowed

to him coolly and he noticed that she did not care to see him, so the politic employee of the house of Severn made haste to be pleasant.

"You have your hands full to-night, Miss Kate."

"Yes."

"Too bad Mrs. Severn couldn't be down."

"Yes, it's unfortunate."

"You don't mind my saying you look a bit tired, do you?"

"I feel tired, thank you. By the way, Mr. Shortridge, are all those papers finished in regard to that little inheritance of mine?"

"Yes, yes, quite ready, Miss Severn, quite ready. All you have to do is to ask Bolton of our office there, you know, you remember him, don't you, just ask Bolton and he'll turn them over to you any time."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow. All finished up two days ago. Proper release from your guardian executed—all you have to do now is to go to the bank and get your money."

"Thank you. I may drop in to-morrow morning."

With a bow she left him and proceeded to another group, some eight or ten in number, conspicuous among whom was Mamie Frale.

"Papa says," said Mamie, "that it's all the extravagance of the workmen, that if they tried to save their wages there wouldn't be any need of all these strikes."

"Yes. Fellows like this Richardson here, that had poor Locksport arrested, hauled all over the town to a police court and made a spectacle of! Fellows like that are running around here talking about Germany

and the way she takes care of her workmen," observed one of the gentlemen.

"Germany! Shucks! Nonsense!"

"That's what I say."

"Well, I should think so," contributed a third. "It seems to me people ought to have a little patriotism and pride in their own institutions."

"That Richardson's no good, they tell me. They say you can buy him just like the rest of them. I suppose he's out to be bought."

"Don't you know," cried Mamie, "I happened to meet him the other day. Kate Severn, I don't suppose she'd object to my telling it; Kate, you know, has met him down here—he has a place right next to this."

"What sort of a fellow is he?"

"Oh, you know how those people are. I didn't fancy him a bit, and the funniest thing was, you know, that Toto, I had Toto with me, and Toto took an instinctive dislike to that man. Don't you know, I think nice people's dogs have an instinct that way!"

"They certainly have," added the other lady; "they know that kind of people just as soon as they sniff them. You never can make anything out of that class. You can never make them one of our class."

"Thank God for that!" It was Kate Severn's voice behind them, so sharp that they almost dropped their glasses. Every eye was instantly upon her. There was a dead hush.

"I say it again. Thank God he's not one of your class, or one of mine, whichever you want to call it. What is that man doing to-night but studying—studying to do some good for his fellow creatures while we're up here drinking champagne and gambling away

fortunes that would keep hunger away from the mouths of a hundred families in a single night.

"I know what I'm talking about," she continued, growing more and more excited. "I've been through it, been through it in the past three or four days. I've seen them starving, do you hear? I've seen them starving."

Here she stamped her foot with some emphasis, her cheeks growing warmer all the while and her eyes flashing.

"You, there, Charlie Hudson, you're a nice one to talk about the extravagance of workmen and the like, aren't you, with a million turned up under your plate by your own father, without your lifting your hand to earn it? We're a nice lot to be arguing here to-night about a cent an hour's increase in workmen's wages, when we drink up champagne, every bubble of which is worth a cent—yes, every tiny, miserable little bubble is worth a penny, but you splash it about by the bucketful! And you, Teddy Hillman, what were you doing the other day but boasting that you were throwing dice for an automobile at every throw? And then we talk about the extravagance of workmen, do we? How would you like to work one hour to gain one cent? How would you like to spend twelve or fourteen hours in one of those mills and keep it up for seven days in the week and go home to a sick wife and half a dozen children? And then you all stand here and say a man can be bought and is corrupt that you've never set eyes on in your life, simply because he thinks that some of these wretched people ought to get a little more than they have, while you're rioting—yes, rioting here to-night in luxury!"

Her voice growing louder and clearer all the while, the scene she was creating had attracted the attention of many others in the room who had slowly been crowding around the little circle. A general whisper ran through the apartment that something extraordinary was occurring.

"Where do we all spring from that are here to-night looking so fine, I'd like to know? Who was your ancestor, Mr. Ringer? He was a puddler, wasn't he, or something of that sort, about sixty years ago—and maybe a shorter time, wasn't it? And you, there, Mr. Hillman—"

"What's the matter here? What's the matter here?" It was the voice of Severn, making his way through the little crowd to the side of his daughter. "What's the matter here, Kate?"

"Nothing," she replied; "I'm going upstairs without apology to anybody." She turned upon her heel and rapidly left the room.

"What's the matter here?" asked Severn of Ringer. "Mamie, what's all this about? I heard some of it and I want to hear the rest."

"Oh, nothing," replied Ringer.

"We were just hearing our records," added Hillman.

"We had the misfortune to make some unpleasant remark about Mr. Richardson down here, for his having arrested Mr. Locksport," said Mamie, "but I wouldn't mind it a bit, if I were you, Mr. Severn. Don't you think, Louise, we've played long enough to-night? Suppose we go."

The wrath of Severn now became great. He fumed

while he limped among his guests, and apologizing here and there and getting additional scraps of Kate's remarks from those who were willing to tattle and who invariably made it worse, he was beside himself with rage, which, however, he had to keep within some bounds until his guests had departed.

Locksport and Shortridge were the last to go.

"The devil will be to pay to-night," said the former, "so I'll get out at once. Glad you communicated so promptly with Hagan. Be down to-morrow morning for sure, you say."

"Yes, I told him he'd have to come down. This dismissal might not stand. So he'll be in my office to-morrow morning. Good night, old man! Ah, Mr. Severn, just going to bid you good night. Sorry Mrs. Severn's laid up!"

"What's all this about the girl back here and this fellow Richardson?" cried Severn. "Just wait a minute here, now, Shortridge. I want to talk to you."

Upon this they sat down, the old man breathing rapidly.

"Some of you people," resumed Severn, "must know something about this thing. This girl's been defending this fellow Richardson and all these fellows for some time past. Now to-night she makes a big scene. People don't break loose that way without some reason for it."

"I suppose not."

"Well, what do you know about it? Do you know anything?"

"Oh, I don't know, Mr. Severn," replied the cautious Shortridge, who, though he bore the girl no particular

good-will, was even-tempered in things of this kind and did not like to stir up trouble that might involve himself.

"Well, now if you know anything, I'm entitled to know it too. Do you hear? Right this minute too. This thing's going to be investigated from the bottom."

"Oh, wait until to-morrow, Mr. Severn."

"No, sir, no to-morrow at all! It's going to be out to-night, the whole business. You're hesitating there. You know something, I can see it."

"Well, all I know is this, Mr. Severn. The other day when I went to have a talk with Richardson at his house, I met him down there at the little pagoda."

"Well?"

"Why, Kate was there with him."

"The hell she was!" cried the old man. "Talking to him, you mean—sitting there with him? Talking to him?"

"Yes, she was there. I don't know whether she had been sitting down or not, but she'd been talking to him."

"Oh, she was, was she? Oh, she was, eh? Uh?"

"Now, Mr. Severn, don't get excited. The whole matter doesn't amount to anything, I think."

"You just keep quiet. Just leave that to me. And who else knows this?"

"Why, I don't know especially. Don't know as anybody does. Why, yes, I might say Mrs. Severn—she knows something about it. I think she and I spoke of it to each other."

"Well, by God!" cried the old man. "And this un-

der my roof! Right under my nose! Just wait here—just wait here. Don't you leave this house now till I come back."

With that he hobbled upstairs, cursing every step of the way, made his way to Kate's room and pounded thunderingly upon the door of her outer apartment. She, having made up her mind to have no scene with him that night, made no response, in consequence of which, fearing that Shortridge might betake himself away, he hobbled down again.

"It'll be a warm day for her to-morrow," he resumed, pouring out one oath after another. "What kind of a man have you been to keep this thing quiet from me? Do you suppose I want ingrates in the house? What do I pay you for? To keep things like this from me, that are more important than a million dollars!"

It was half an hour before he was under any control at all, at the end of which time Shortridge made his escape, promising the old gentleman to discuss the whole affair with him tranquilly the next day.

But Severn had not done with it yet. He now made his way upstairs again and hurrying to his wife's rooms, which adjoined his own, threw the apartment into a blaze of light with the turn of an electric button.

"What's this Shortridge's been telling me?"

"What—what's this?" ejaculated the startled woman, aroused from sleep.

"Do you hear what I say? What's this Shortridge's been telling me? What's this you've been keeping from me?"

"My God, Wallowell, what—what—what do you mean?" asked she, pale with terror from her guilty conscience.

"It's great things you've been keeping from me. Out with it all now!"

Crawling slowly from her bed inch by inch, her lips white, her eyes round with fear, she crept, without once removing her gaze from him, to a place between him and the outer door, crouching all the while, the wretched thing, as if to escape the spring of a bull. Beside himself though he was with passion, Severn could not help wondering at her fright.

"It's all—all false," she said, "all false," her voice in a hoarse whisper.

"You lie!" he roared. "She's been defending him again downstairs there, right before the whole crowd, made a scene this night, and Shortridge has told me the whole thing about her, and you concealing it for her, are you? You were in league with this Richardson, too, were you?"

"Oh, my God!" she exclaimed, and overcome by the reaction from her terror, fell in a dead faint.

He now rang the bell for the French maid to restore the dame, who, again in hysterics, retired to her bed. Severn, for his part, giving up all hope of attacking Kate that night, hobbled and stamped with rage till two or three in the morning, accusing Wattles as a party to the deception too, and resorting finally to several glasses of whiskey before he could find repose.

CHAPTER XXXVI

“OH, it's turrible, turrible, Mrs. McFadden, turrible!”

“Oh, the poor little crature, all alone up there wid him this minute.”

“This minute, indeed, Mrs. McFadden, an' he ordered me away from the door wid the wickedest voice ye ever heard in your life an' sint me down stairs a flyin', an' the last I heard was poor Miss Kate a lettin' him in.”

“Yis, Nora, an' that divil of a stepmother a slapin' the slape of an angel, I suppose. I'd like to go up there wid a rollin' pin at her this minute, mesilf. I'd take some of the hysterics out of her, that I wud. It's almost a disgrace for a dacent woman like you an' a dacent woman like me, Nora, to be in the same house wid that crature.”

“Oh, she's a vile one, an' if it hadn't been traision to keep the secret from ye, Mrs. McFadden, I'd niver have told ye a word, havin' sworn on me honor as I did to Miss Kate, an' I know you're the last woman in the world to be tellin' anythin' to anybody, not if it's given ye in secrecy.”

“It's right ye are, me child. Whativer's dropped in me is dropped in a well, and when one of the byes here this mornin' came hintin' around to me whither the old lady hadn't been found out, says I to him, says I, just this way, 'What's that to you, I'd like to know.

I'm not tellin' what I know, sor. All I have to say of your mistress is, that she's the lowest woman that walks the strates of the town.' That's all the satisfaction he got out of me, that wan."

"Sure, an' I knew the sacret would be safe with you, Mrs. McFadden, an' oh, poor Kate—you'll excuse me blubberin' here before ye, Mrs. McFadden, but whin I think of her up there this minute wid that old man! Sure I thought his rheumatism was becomin' so chronical with him he'd not be able to hop around the house in this way to make trouble for everybody in it, but I guess the old villun's recoverin'."

"God forbid it, Nora. Anyway, he may have a relapse, there's nothin' so dangerous as recoverin'. But there's her bell this minit."

"Oh, the poor crature! I'm flyin', Mrs. McFadden, I'm flyin'."

Kate Severn during another sleepless night had prepared to meet her father. His pounding upon the door she had paid no attention to at night, but now she responded to his knock at ten in the morning.

The old man flung open the unlocked door to face a character pliable indeed to love, but as dogged and determined as his own in the face of opposition or injustice. Sputtering and blowing from excitement he surveyed her for a moment and then exclaimed:

"So you've been disgracing me, have you?" No response.

"Do you hear me? You've been disgracing me, have you?"

"That's what you say." She sat down in an arm-chair and looked out of the window without the slightest expression of thought, feeling, or emotion.

"You thought you'd keep on fooling me all the time, did you?" No response.

"You thought I'd be stupid enough never to find this all out, did you?" No response.

"You're in love, are you, with this skunk down here?"

"I never said so, did I?"

"Oh, you don't need to say so. Your actions speak louder than words. I'm just as smart as you, you hussy, and I know what's been going on. This is the cause of all these fine speeches of yours, all this solicitude about the public welfare, the rights of the poor, and what not, uh? The next thing was to run away with him, wasn't it, eh? I guess you'll find I'm just as smart as you are, just as smart as that treacherous dynamiter of yours. Oh, it's a fine piece of business, the way you've helped him, helped him try to ruin your father. Do you know there's a strike declared this morning at my mills? Do you hear what I say? The strike's on at our mills, too?"

"I know nothing about it."

"No, nor you don't care, do you, sitting there looking out of the window, and ashamed to answer me, ashamed to look your father in the face, but I'll get even with you, you hussy! I know it all now, I know every word of it. I suspected it. Meeting him down the road here and what not—oh, you haven't told me all, but I know it, I know all you've been doing, every word of it. You haven't made a move but I knew about it. Don't keep hoping there that I don't know it all."

"That saves me the trouble of telling it."

"You'll be impudent to me, too, will you? You'll

try to use me the way you have your stepmother, that's been concealing all this from me to try to save you."

"I'm much obliged to her."

"Oh, you are, are you? You'd have her put out of the house this minute, and her doing everything she can to save you. Denied to my face last night, she did, that you knew the fellow at all, said it was all false when I had the whole story from Shortridge himself. She's been the best stepmother any girl ever had and what have you shown her but ingratitude and abuse, impudence and smart little smiles and sniffs? But I'll take all that out of you before I'm through with you."

"You can begin now, then."

"I'll lock you up with just bread and water for a week! I'll turn you out of doors without a penny!"

"Do what you please."

"I'll turn you out of doors without a penny, I tell you. Oh, you think you're smart and brave, don't you? You'll find what it is to go out and earn your own living. You'll find what it is not to have a dollar to your name."

"I suppose I can keep what mother left me."

"Oh, ho! that's what you're thinkin' about, is it? That's made you so smart and brave. Why, it wouldn't buy you an automobile. You'd be a pauper. You'd have to drive your own car. You wouldn't have more than one maid. You'd be a pauper. So you think that's going to make you fat and rich, do you, that little pittance! Just enough to have you running about here with people that have only one car and a servant or two. Oh, you'll find that fine after

all this luxury, won't you, and your friends cutting you, Miss Impudence, you ungrateful hussy!"

"I think I can stand it if you can."

"Shut your mouth, you impudent thing! I suppose he heard about this, this Richardson, heard about this little bit of money and wants to get his hands on that. Why, it wouldn't buy him a bath! Go and spend it and give him a bath, that's the first thing he needs. Give him a bath, the low skunk!"

"Here, take your house! Take your filthy riches!" she cried, springing to her feet and goaded at last beyond endurance. "There's my clothes in the closet there—take them! Take them! I don't want them. I'd rather work with my hands than stay in this house. Do you want my rings? Do you want my rings? Here, take this—and this!"

She was now flinging upon the floor rubies and pearls and diamonds.

"And take these too, if you want them! Take them! Do you want them? Do you hear me, do you want them?"

With this she flung down a small casket of jewels snatched from her dressing-table. They bounded along the polished floor and were lost in rugs, in pillows, and in the tapestry.

"What do I want with all this? What is it to me but wretchedness here every day? Yes, do you want them? Do you want them? Do you want my rings and clothes and shoes? Do you hear me? Do you hear me?"

The old sinner backed toward the door before her flashing eyes, for never had he had to face a rage so utterly regardless of himself.

"I'll be out of your house! I'll be out of it soon enough, you needn't worry about me!" she cried. "I'll take care of myself."

"Oh, ho!" retorted he, rallying a little. "So that's your game, is it? So you'd be off, eh? You want to be with him, I suppose! Suits you well to leave your father's house, does it? Well, I'll fix that! You'll be on the broad seas in the next thirty-six hours, if I have to lock you up and put you on bread and water and have two policemen carry you to the pier. I'll have no scene with you. That's what you want, but I'll let you see who's boss in this house, you—you disgraceful hussy, bringing shame on me before a houseful of people! You'd better pick up your rings," he continued as he passed out of the door, "you'll need them! You'll need them! You'll have to pawn them to live on before you're much older. You'll be on your way to Europe, too, just as fast as I can pack you, bag and baggage, and I'll see where you're locked up so that no sneaking fox'll come round where you are!"

With this he left the room, satisfied to make a partial triumph and to invent a course of action more severe. The daughter, recovering from her fit of passion, suffered no relapse into hysterics or tears, as a weaker nature might have done, but calming herself by degrees sat down after some angry pacing of the room to meditate self-defense for the future.

Calling Nora, she bade her accompany her to town, ordering at once her own automobile, and she permitted, though she did not request, the maid to pick up the jewel box and the scattered gems. Her first errand must be at Shortridge's office to get her legacy, where-

upon she would draw from the bank every dollar. She would next arrange with her Cousin Julia or Aunt Emma to stay at either of their houses. From one of these citadels she would bid defiance to her father.

CHAPTER XXXVII

JOHN RICHARDSON rose early on Friday morning, for even in sleep his mind had been too much troubled for long repose. The first thing that he hurried to see was the morning newspaper, where to his chagrin he found not a word from Hagan. On the way to town he bought other papers, in none of which did any announcement from his superior appear, and when at last he did discover one such, his vexation became the greater. It was only a short dispatch from the Commonwealth Attorney to the effect that, having heard of the dismissal of the Locksport charges, he was glad Mr. Richardson had seen fit at once to take that step. For himself, it continued, he would reinvestigate the charges on his return, the whole dispatch conveying the impression that this was the first he had heard about the affair. This news item, John noticed, bore the date-line of Erie and not of Meadville.

Nor in his office did he find any communication from Hagan, though he inquired from nearly everybody whether any had been received. Slow to anger, he at last began to feel a burning resentment. Honesty would be deceived by credulity no longer.

Dickson and Tom Richardson were the first to make their appearance.

"You see how you've been treated, John," said Tom. "I don't suppose it's necessary to say anything."

"No, I think not, Tom."

"I suppose you've heard of the strike in Severn's mills this morning, Mr. Richardson?" remarked Dickson.

"Yes, and I'm not very sorry for it."

"Most of the men here, as you know, Mr. Richardson, are terribly out of humor with you about this Locksport business, but I want you to feel that you've not lost the confidence of me."

"Thank you, Dickson. I want to tell you that the others will not lose their confidence in me, either. I suppose they're feeling pretty unkindly towards me now."

"Yes, I'm sorry to say, yes, honestly they are, and we haven't been able to hold them down at all. This strike at Severn's was precipitated immediately after they heard that Locksport wasn't even going to be tried. Of course they hook old Severn up with all these troubles of ours."

"You asked me yesterday whether I would have Severn arrested," continued John, "and I don't want to be misunderstood one way or the other. I'm sorry to say I'm not in a humor for talking about any step forward just now until I clear up a little matter here of my own. But now that you're here, I want you to feel sure of just two things. I'll not have him arrested unless I have adequate evidence prepared, and certainly I will have him arrested if I have adequate evidence. All this is based upon the supposition that I'm allowed to do anything at all. You see the situation."

"No word from Hagan of when he is coming back?"

"No."

"Well, Mr. Richardson, if Mr. Hagan doesn't turn up by to-morrow morning, you'll have the pleasure, or whatever it may be, of having old man Severn arrested, because we're not going to stop."

"The boys are dead sure and fixed on that thing, John," added Tom.

At this moment the voice of Eddie arguing in the hall was heard through the half-open door.

"Aw, what's the matter with you? I'll not pay you the twenty-five cents. Think I'm a National Bank?"

"Well, they told me to collect from you," said another boy, at which some warm words being exchanged, John called from his room that Eddie come in and explain.

"This here kid's come over from Shortridge's office to get some papers—a messenger—wants me to pay the charges here. Why don't they pay 'em themselves?"

"What papers does he want?" asked John. "Tell him to come in here. What papers do you want, boy?"

"Says he wants the papers about Locksport's arrest to take over to Shortridge," Eddie interposed. "Him and Hagan want to talk about it."

"Hagan?"

"Yes. Mr. Hagan's over there."

"Over where?"

"Over at Shortridge's office. This muff couldn't make things clear so I had to telephone over there to Shortridge's office and they told me Mr. Hagan and Mr. Shortridge were waitin' for the papers, to hurry up."

John had already sprung from his chair. Hagan, it appeared was now in town and had gone to the office of the general enemy rather than to his own.

"You get those papers, Eddie," said he quietly but firmly, "and bring them over there and hand them to me first. I'm going over there ahead of you," saying which he was out of the room.

"There's going to be trouble over there, Dickson," said Tom gravely. "John's in a humor when nobody ought to fool with him. I think we'd better hurry over to that office ourselves and kind o' sit in the hall there on some business or other till we see what's up."

"I guess we had," Dickson responded, following him out of the door.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

AN honest man's wrath is the terror of knaves. When John Richardson bolted into the door of Shortridge's private room, he did so without knocking or warning of any kind, and three men whom he confronted hung their heads in uneasiness and shame, Shortridge, Hagan and Locksport. The presence of Locksport was all that was needed to inflame the mind of the injured man.

"Why, how d'ye do this morning, Mr. Richardson!" exclaimed Shortridge.

"I'm pretty well, thank you."

Locksport, pretending to no acquaintance with Richardson, made no observation or greeting, and Hagan was slow to rally.

"I'll be over at the office, John, in a little bit," he said. "The boys called me in here, Shortridge and Mr. Locksport, as I was coming down town."

"I thought I'd save you the trouble, Hagan."

"Oh, yes, that's all right, John, I'll be over there."

"Well, what can I do for you, Mr. Richardson?" asked Shortridge.

"I don't think there's anything you can do for me yourself, particularly, thank you, Mr. Shortridge," replied John, turning his eyes on Hagan, who began to hang his head.

There was silence a moment and then John added,

"I wanted to talk with you, Hagan, and I'd just as lief talk with you before these gentlemen."

"Well, now, John," cried the other shiftily, and with a tone of trifling irritation, "I'm busy here as you see. I'll be over there in the office in a minute."

"We'll talk of it here just the same."

The other men looking at Hagan in a way that seemed to call upon him for some exertion of courage, he turned his head abruptly and, attempting to face John, though not rising from his chair, retorted:

"Now, see here, I don't like this, John. I told you I'd be over there in a few minutes and that's all I want to talk about it now."

"I should think Mr. Hagan would know his own business," remarked Locksport.

"And you, for your part, had better mind yours," said John sternly.

"Oh, see here, now, Richardson," interposed Shortridge suavely but in a tone of some firmness, "that sort of thing won't do, you know, old man."

"I'm attending to this myself," said John. "Hagan, have you lied to me?"

"What's that?" cried Hagan, who, however, did not rise from his chair.

"Hagan, you telephoned me from Meadville yesterday afternoon to dismiss those charges and you would file a statement, copy of which you read to me, for the papers, and relieve me of the responsibility of dismissing a charge that I had begun myself. Now that's true, isn't it?"

"No, sir—that is, no, no. No, John, there's some mistake here now. Meadville? I don't know anything about Meadville. I haven't been in Meadville."

"Why, Richardson, I can show you right now," broke in Shortridge, "that I was talking to Mr. Hagan from Erie myself, over the telephone last night and induced him to come down here on the night train so as to be here this morning, the fact being, you know, Richardson," here he made a pleasant little politic laugh, "you're so forceful and restless in this matter I had to call Hagan down here to try to tame you down. Now, I think that helps to clear things up a bit."

"I got a telephone message from you, Hagan," John continued without once taking his eyes from him, "and I talked with you myself at Meadville, and you said what I say you said, didn't you?"

"No, John, you're mistaken. I ought to be very angry with you, I confess, the way you're taking me to task, but I know you're excited about some of these events and you know I think a great deal of you. Now I haven't been to Meadville, and I didn't telephone you at all. Somebody else has been using that wire and working you that way."

It flashed through Richardson's mind that somebody, inspired by scoundrels like Locksport and Shortridge might have used the telephone in Hagan's name and, while Hagan might admit his friendliness to the other faction as well as their having importuned him by wire, he still had it open to him to say that he had never telephoned to Richardson. The situation was the more perplexing because the voice cannot always be positively distinguished in the telephone. Notwithstanding he gave only a moment's credence to this thought he began to feel his proofs slipping away from him, nor would he have

had the moral courage to proceed further had it not been for the shifty manner of Hagan. In short, he was in a poor situation to prove a lie when the door was opened by Eddie.

This youth, who bore that mingled sweetness and impudence peculiar to our urchins, was a type out of whom many leaders have been evolved in the strife of commerce. When he reached the office of Shortridge he told the clerk who met him that he had orders to deliver the documents to Richardson himself, so he was permitted to step into the private room without further ceremony.

"Here's them papers, Mr. Richardson!"

Richardson took them in his hand, motioning to the lad to retire.

"Yes, hurry up and shut the door there," said Shortridge.

"Say, Mr. Hagan," asked Eddie turning at the door, "telephone office wants to know who to charge that—that phone of yours from Meadville to, to Mr. Richardson yesterday."

Hagan, who had partly recovered his composure, was able to mutter something of an oath and to wave his hand impatiently.

"Never mind that," he said. "Run along there."

"Hagan," said Richardson slowly, as the door closed behind the boy, "I'll give you just three minutes to sign a writing here absolving me of any blame and assuming responsibility for that dismissal. You will sign it right here."

"Now, see here, Mr. Shortridge," interrupted Locksport, stepping forward, "this sort of thing it seems to me has got to stop in a gentleman's office. What's

all this bully-ragging about here? This is your office, isn't it?"

Shortridge nodded but he was doing something else, for under his desk was a wire which directly connected it with a police station close by and he had already touched the button.

"I think, Mr. Richardson, you're showing yourself a bit hasty here. Mr. Hagan's in my office and is entitled to respectful treatment."

"He'll get it, but he'll get it only on one condition!" cried Richardson.

"Well, I'll be damned!" said Locksport. "What sort of thing is this?"

"You keep quiet, Locksport!" Richardson retorted determinedly.

"Do you know who you're talking to?" asked Locksport in a furious tone. "What do you mean by this talk in this office? You ought to be thrown in the street!"

He had hardly uttered the words when Richardson with one blow felled him to the floor.

The world will be old before one man's striking another is fully divested of the tragic and the sublime. All four were for a moment dead still. Then Hagan and Shortridge assisted the bruised financier to his feet and several moments passed in which nobody knew just what to do between the humiliation of Locksport and the fright of his two friends, who were too much afraid of Richardson's angry attitude to tell him what they thought of him. Finally the latter resumed:

"You're going to sign that, are you, Hagan?"

Hagan looked uneasily at Locksport, already con-

quered, and at Shortridge unwilling to enter the battle.

"Why, Richardson, this is all the damndest piece of business I ever heard of. You know I never dodged any responsibility in my life."

"Are you going to sign that, Hagan? Here's a piece of paper, now. Are you going to sign it or not?"

At this moment the door was thrown open by two mermidons of the law.

"What's this row about here?"

"Just take care of this gentleman!" cried Shortridge.

"Take him in hand there at once," said Hagan, and before John could offer resistance, he was seized from behind and was in the hall, the gentlemen in uniform dragging him toward the outward door. At this juncture they were themselves surprised from the rear by both Tom Richardson and Dickson, in the midst of which aid Richardson, freeing himself, was able to bound back and deliver Hagan two handsome punches in the face. By this time the officers had drawn the disagreeable weapons with which they are always armed and which generally serve them to good purpose. Laying about them heartily, they brought their opponents to time in a moment or two and were able to carry the prisoner off to captivity, followed by Dickson, Tom Richardson, and a volley of oaths.

CHAPTER XXXIX

HARDLY had this crowd left the office of Shortridge when Kate Severn arrived. The rooms were in confusion. With Nora, who accompanied her, she gazed in wonder upon overturned chairs, scattered papers, and a bevy of excited clerks. Through a door ajar into Shortridge's room came the angry voices of men.

"You have that infernal scoundrel behind the bars this night, Hagan, or I'll know why," came from Locksport.

"I think I've got as good cause as you," added Hagan. "Why in the devil hasn't that cab of mine arrived downstairs? Tell that boy again. I can't go through the streets looking like this."

"It's your fault, Shortridge," resumed Locksport. "If you hadn't been so cursed politic with him to begin with, he wouldn't have had the nerve—"

"To make damned fools of both of us the way he has," interrupted Hagan, "but I'll fix him, curse him, the infernal ingrate! He never could have got into that office except for my weakness! He thinks he'll get off with a mere assault and battery, I suppose, but I'll fix him on something worse."

"I saw him grab a paper-weight," said Locksport. "You saw him too, Shortridge."

"I believe I did."

"No believe about it—you did see him and you

know it! I don't see what you're so cursed politic about in this thing for all the time. We get tired of policy. Can't play policy all the time with a man like Richardson. The infernal ruffian!"

"I'll have him up for assault with a dangerous weapon," said Hagan, "and he'll not find it easy to get bail for that."

"If he gets out on bail," cried Locksport, "I'll lay it to your office. Now understand that. That fellow's to be locked up. We'll let him soak in a cell."

Here a boy announced that the cab was below for the gentlemen, and Kate, hearing them emerge from the room, retired with Nora into the office of young Bolton, who, seated upon a desk, was discussing the row. The other clerk immediately left the room and Kate drew from Bolton, a very easy task, some account of what had taken place.

"Can they do anything with him—I mean punish him in any particular way?" asked Kate.

"Well, I hardly think so, between you and me. Of course, he made a rough house of it here, but so far as I can see, he just punched one or two of the gentlemen in there—some kind of a fist row. I don't know—they might have some severer charge and if they did I suppose they could lock him up, for they could ask big bail then."

"What's bail?" asked Kate. "Money, or something else?"

"Oh, bail's a bond that he'll make his appearance when the trial comes up."

"Money?"

"Oh, yes, people can put up cash if they want."

"And if he doesn't, what happens to him?"

"Why, if the charge is one that requires bail or custody, and he doesn't give bail, he's got to stay in jail—stay in prison, of course, till the trial comes off."

"And what do they do with him now? Where do they take him?"

"Take him before a police magistrate. If it's only assault and battery, he pays a small fine and walks off, but if they lay a bigger charge, of course that's different. Then he's got to give bail of maybe several thousand dollars and stay there till he gets it. I don't suppose Richardson could get big bail."

Thus they continued, Nora, with round eyes and mouth open, desiring at all times to interpose some question or objection but compelled to keep silent, and Kate getting the utmost possible information into her mind which very little understood the refinements of law. Then she took up her own business with Bolton, who informed her that everything was ready and who began to produce various papers and receipts that had to be signed. He had a cheque certified and ready for the cash part of the inheritance, and for this a voucher was necessary. While they were finishing this transaction, Shortridge entered.

"Ah, how d'ye do?" said he. "Just come about the estate?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Have you completed the matter yet, Bolton?"

"Yes. Yes, just finishing it up, Mr. Shortridge." Shortridge looked quickly at the papers. Kate had some, but not all of them, in her hands.

"I think," said he, "that this matter ought to stand over for a day or two."

"But she's just signed—"

"No matter. I want to see that it's just exactly correct. There was something Mr. Ellton spoke to me about over the telephone this morning, Miss Kate, that as guardian he wants adjusted just—before you get these papers finally."

"I've got them already, Mr. Shortridge."

"May I look at them?"

"Why, Mr. Shortridge?"

"Well, I don't—I don't wish to interfere, you know, but I think that you probably ought to leave them here, Miss Kate, a day. It's a small matter that your guardian wants for his protection."

"You told me last night everything was ready, you know."

"Yes, but it was just this morning, Miss Kate, that I got this message."

"Where did you get that message from, Mr. Shortridge?" she said. "Was it from my house—my father? But I won't ask you to answer that. This matter's finished, Mr. Shortridge, so far as I'm concerned. I believe I've signed everything, haven't I, Mr. Bolton?"

"Why, yes, Miss Severn, yes, everything's all right so far as—"

"Then I don't think I need to stay here any more, thank you, Mr. Shortridge. Come, Nora, come. Good day, Mr. Shortridge. Good day, Mr. Bolton. Thank you very much."

Saying this, she left the room with a quick step, followed by Nora, who declared that if "any of thim min" had attempted to take the papers out of Miss Kate's hands, they'd have had to do it over

her own body. The mistress, scarcely hearing these loyal observations, made her way to the Second National Bank, where she happened to know one of the principal officers, all of whom she had heard her father say he hated worse than poison. Here she deposited her cheque, a good ten thousand dollars, to the wonder and surprise of the smiling manager, who had a peculiar relish for this new account.

She next betook herself in the automobile, still accompanied by Nora, to the house of her Aunt Emma. The latter lived in a style much more moderate than that of her brother. She had felt unkindly toward him for several years past because he had failed to assist her husband in a speculation that cost him all his own and most of her fortune besides and upon his second marriage she had quickly felt in the manner of the haughty Miriam that their acquaintance could not be equal.

Kate having intimated to her, as soon as she arrived, that the situation between her and the step-mother had at last become unendurable and that she might be compelled to ask the hospitality of her aunt, the latter broke forth volubly:

"It's just what I used to say to your uncle. Nobody on earth could live with that woman. The first thing she started to do was to alienate every one of his relatives and friends. I told John before he died just what would occur, that she'd keep at you till she drove you out of the house, and now that she's got a boy to be heir to all that money, you can depend upon it she's watching things better than ever. You needn't tell me more—I know just what it is to live in a house with a creature like her. What is it

that happened this last time? What's the particular matter now, you poor, dear child?"

"Oh, it's a rather long story, I can't tell you all, aunt."

"No, and you needn't, for I can imagine every word of it. The way that woman carries her head! Why, there's nobody in town fine enough to look at her! If there's a thing in this world that I hate, it's putting on airs. Nothing shows a lower breeding."

"I never liked the way she treated you, either, Aunt Emma," added Kate.

"Oh, me? Why, I never paid any attention to what she said or did! Mercy! I never wanted to know her. Such insolence! as if a person of my family wasn't worth twenty, every one of them, of those Robinsons! Who were the Robinsons anyway, I'd like to know? Nobody ever heard of them till she married my brother. Talks about old family and the like! Thank God, I don't need to talk about old family. Everybody knows who the Severns are. I suppose she thinks the set that I go in is not nice enough for her. I never notice a thing she does. It seems to me, though, common decency would have taught her to have me at that last luncheon she had. Thirty-five people there and me left out. Not that I cared, but just the way it looked, you know. I don't care a bit about it. In fact, I never go near the house, wouldn't go there at all if it wasn't for your father. I like to see my brother once in a while. I wonder what he's been telephoning to me here for, this morning? Says he wants me over at the house this afternoon or evening. Wouldn't tell me what it was, but says he wants me there particularly."

"Are you going over? If you are, I can take you with me now."

"No, thank you, dear, no. But it's very kind of you. I have my own little electric car here. I suppose she thinks that's a cheap little thing, too! But I'll run over sometime late in the afternoon. Now let's have a talk about this matter of yours."

Kate revealed to the aunt only so much as was necessary for her to know, keeping back, of course, the very scandal that would most have delighted her. As to her intimacy with Richardson, this with pardonable pride she made as slight as possible, so that the final effect on Aunt Emma's mind was that the girl had been treated with extreme rigor by the father, and with low and unjust suspicion by the step-mother. The aunt concluded, at parting, that Kate was entirely welcome to the house whenever she wanted it and that the fine Mrs. Severn should see that the poor girl had another home in which she might revel with less luxury but with infinite liberty. Kate then departed in fair spirits, for in addition to escape from a hateful situation at home, there now lay open to her, she felt sure, an opportunity to receive the only visitor whom she desired to have.

This hope gave her, though, only a moment's happiness. In what a situation was that unfortunate and innocent fellow at this very time! If heavy bail should be exacted, how impossible for him to obtain it, or, if at all, how probably would he have to wait for it in a prison cell. She bought eagerly the early editions of the newspapers, to find small comfort in them while she ate a few bites in a down-town café.

At a quarter before three she at last saw a headline,

"Bail Fixed at \$5,000.00!" Scandalous, wicked sum, she thought. What was left but that she protect him? This design slowly forming, yet during several hours rejected, overcame finally her many scruples of delicacy and prudence.

But how could it be accomplished? How could Wallowell Severn's daughter furnish bail to John Richardson and nobody know it? To succeed in and be discovered would be as bad as to attempt it and fail, the whole town being sure to fall into convulsions of scandal and abuse from every quarter and at both the participants. On the other hand, should she sit by, aware of so much villainy and see a cultured, high-minded man pass the night on a cot in jail, deserted, vilified, disgraced?

Impossible! She went at once to her new depository and from the agreeable manager obtained the necessary sum in five bills of one thousand dollars each, assured by the gentleman himself that, if Wallowell Severn's daughter wanted it, she could have fifty as well. Then she rejoined Nora in the autocar, while the banker, looking on, was undecided whether to account for all this by the new feminine vice of gambling or the extravagance of jewels.

A full half hour she trifled in the shops or rode in silence while she invented plans and Nora endeavored to cheer her spirits. The afternoon wore on, the smoke sank heavier on the town, dusk approached, and lights began to blink from inside offices. At last she resolved to act.

"Nora, you and Pat O'Donnell are sure to be married next year?"

"We're hopin' so, mum."

"And he's the most reliable, the most secret man in the world?"

"Och, the bist in the world!"

"Where does he work? How soon could I get him?"

Nora in endless sentences described the spot that was honored by Pat, who, a night janitor in a small office building, was sure to be about to go on duty at this hour. Reluctantly then did Kate begin to confide in the maid the step she was to take though not the affection that prompted it. It was a "great interest" she felt in Mr. Richardson, who was being crushed by unusual injustice. Nora avoiding anything in words or manner that would look like a belief on her part that her mistress cared for Richardson other than as a friend, lauded him to the skies, abused his persecutors, and vowed the angels would remember Kate in Heaven.

It took nearly an hour to find O'Donnell and to arrange through Nora, who was in her glory at his being called into so much importance, that he should carry the money into the hands of Richardson. Galantly did the little Irishman, sworn to secrecy by both women a thousand times, undertake the errand, nor was there ever as much fidelity or pride in the ambassador of kings. That the chauffeur might get no hint of what was going on, the business was concluded in a confectioner's shop, whence Pat departed with a mysterious air, pledged to telephone Nora at Severn's if the mission should be accomplished.

Then poor Kate, uneasy and worn out, re-entered her automobile and sank back to encounter what language called home. Half faint from lack of food,

she had now to consider the possible consequences of this, the latest offense against her father's prejudices, an offense undoubtedly more exasperating, should he hear of it, than all the others put together. Nor did she try to persuade herself that he would not, sooner or later, hear of it. Obligated in her hurry to lean upon the fidelity, she had been forced also to accept the indiscreetness of Nora, to whose weakness in this respect must be added the whispering of Pat O'Donnell to a few trusted friends.

Not for a moment, though, did she regret her action, as, speeding into the suburbs, she saw at length the lights of the Severn mansion.

CHAPTER XL

TO be led through the streets by two policemen is little soothing to innocence and it was with much difficulty that Richardson avoided making his situation still more disagreeable by resistance. A crowd gathering as usual followed him to the police station but the majority, who would have almost mobbed his captors a day or two ago, were now less partial to the official who had dismissed the charges against Locksport.

Arriving at the station attended closely by both Dickson and his brother Tom, Richardson demanded that he be immediately taken before a magistrate where he would plead guilty of an assault, to obtain the speedy release from confinement commonly allowed offenders who use their bare fists in a temper. This request, however, was denied him by the gentlemen in uniform, who informed him that they knew what they were about and that it was his business to keep cool. In this way two or three hours were lost, Richardson fuming and fretting with no more effect than a caged lion upon his keepers. In the meantime new excitement had arisen from reports of riot at Severn's mills.

Chafing continually, Richardson nevertheless kept his temper and succeeded in inducing both Dickson and Tom to keep theirs since nothing could be worse than to irritate his custodians. The latter, mean-

while, would discuss with each other petty arrests that had just been made, relating how the Chicago Kid had been taken in hand very neatly by Sergeant Brown, assisted by some unusually clever work of Detective McDougall, or predicting that that well-known burglar, Two-fingered Mike, would be laid up for certain within another forty-eight hours. They would have also mysterious talks over the telephone in which they contrived to make answers without letting their auditors in the station know with whom they were communicating, to all of which both Tom and Dickson would lend, as well as Richardson, a very attentive ear.

"That's Locksport now," Dickson would say.

"No, I think it's Hagan that's talking to them now," would be Tom's observation. Richardson was allowed to see the extra editions of the afternoon papers, which with pictures both of Richardson and of the men upon whom he had visited the grossest ingratitude, denounced him as a dangerous and insidious malefactor who owed everything to the Commonwealth Attorney and had then assaulted him. The strike at Severn's mills and the turbulence that had just arisen were also laid at his door.

"That's the way they go," said Tom. "They've got their gang working down there at the mill stirring up this riot and we have to answer for it."

"Yes," added Dickson, "I'll bet there's a hundred men down there drawing salary from Locksport or Shortridge or Severn and playing strikers with clubs in their hands."

It was two o'clock before the policemen announced to Richardson that he could be taken before a magis-

trate, Justice Kline. This jurist was well-known both by Richardson and his companions to be as much in the service of the enemy as if he had been on their payroll. He pretended, however, to great impartiality.

"What's all this about?" he demanded.

"Just a simple assault, your Honor," replied Richardson. "I lost my temper over here in Mr. Shortridge's office and I'm sorry to say I passed a blow or two, one to Reginald Locksport and the other to—why, to—Mr. Hagan himself."

At this moment appeared Mr. Simmons from Hagan's office.

"We wish, your Honor, to have this gentleman bound over on a serious charge—assault with a dangerous weapon."

Both Richardson and his brother showing at this considerable surprise, Mr. Simmons nodded gravely to his Honor as if he had already forced the other side to betray apprehension and admit a degree of guilt.

"Exactly," he continued, "assault with a dangerous weapon."

"That's a different thing then!" exclaimed his Honor.

"Dangerous weapon! What do you mean?" cried John Richardson.

"He had no weapons at all! What are you talking about?" exclaimed Tom.

"Just keep quiet, Tom. Keep cool now," his brother whispered.

"I'm not excited a bit," retorted Tom, "never was cooler in my life. They're a set of liars, your Honor,

a low-lived gang of cut-throats, themselves. Let me alone, John. Can't you see how cool I am? Weapons!"

"Must have been a toothpick!" ejaculated Dickson.

"Order in the court!" said his Honor. "Grave matter."

"A grave matter indeed! Your Honor's right," continued Simmons. "We shall show that Mr. Richardson used a very dangerous weapon—a massive paper-weight, and a sharp, strong, steel paper-cutter, either sufficient to have killed one of the gentlemen he assaulted."

"You infernal liar!" muttered Richardson.

"I'm called a liar already, your Honor. I suppose the gentleman wants another row down here—tries to put things through by mob rule here, too."

"There'll be nothing of that kind here," said Justice Kline. "You just keep quiet here, Mr. Richardson, I'm running this court."

"Keep still, Tom," said John.

"We ask for ten thousand dollars bail," resumed Simmons.

"Ten thousand!"

"A serious offense charged here," observed his Honor, while Richardson and his companions looked at each other in despair. The room was meanwhile largely filled with persons favorable to the side of Richardson, and these began with their murmurs to affect even the conscience, or the effrontery, of the magistrate. Richardson then rose and having gotten clear command of his faculties, said:

"I'm sure your Honor would be very unwilling to stand before the public as an instrument of possible in-

justice. What you want in exercising your discretion at this time as to the amount of bail is a little advice, I suppose, upon the whole situation, for I am confident your Honor would not wish any faction in the present troubles in this city to make use of you."

"I certainly would not."

"I think I rightly estimated your Honor's temperament," resumed John. "Now you notice that neither of these gentlemen who charge me with these grave offenses are personally present."

"We can have 'em here in a few minutes if you want 'em," cried Simmons.

"Well, you've had plenty of time to bring them here, this thing having occurred before noon," continued John. "I suppose his Honor doesn't wish to keep court all day for people to come here prepared."

His Honor nodded and looked at the crowd, which seemed to be favorable to this argument.

"Now, your Honor, I have this statement to make; all that occurred in Mr. Shortridge's room was my having gotten into a quarrel with the gentlemen there and having hit them with my bare fists. Your Honor will see that it will be a terrible outrage, in the absence of a sworn statement here, to exact such excessive bail as ten thousand dollars. There is no proof, either, that the gentlemen supposed to be injured have received anything more, no matter what implement was used, than a casual wound, or that they could not be here in person. In fact, my young friend states that they could be here in two or three minutes, if we wanted their presence. This indicates, does it not, your Honor, that nothing very grave has happened? I admit it does not prove that I have

not used a dangerous weapon, but it does prove that no very serious mishap has occurred in consequence. I therefore think your Honor is justified in using your well-known common sense in keeping this bail within reasonable limits."

A low murmur of applause going through the room, his Honor was visibly affected and Simmons would have come again to the attack with a fresh volley, had not his Honor waved his hand and with great gravity said:

"This bail will be fixed at five thousand dollars. That's plenty."

Even against this amount Richardson reasoned strongly, supported by many additional evidences of enthusiasm among his friends. But his Honor thought he had made a nice compromise between the amount demanded by capital and the trifle that would be satisfactory to labor, exhibiting, as will be perceived, all the characteristics of a great jurist in an uneasy situation. There was nothing to do but submit to it, though both Dickson and Tom looked about in despair.

In vain did they search the town during the next two or three hours before dark. Each additional hour made it plainer that John must pass that night in a cell. The Public Welfare League, it was felt, would supply the funds for his release, but the members had already scattered to their various homes, and Totten, the one upon whom they could easily rely, was absent at Johnstown.

As for Tom Richardson, he grew weaker and weaker with excitement. The injustice done his brother, added to the necessity of his giving some

attention to the situation at Severn's mills, the repeated importunity of various people in the labor faction that he come down there and attempt to restore order, the false charges expressed that he himself had been causing the disturbances, and the feeling that all his efforts during the two weeks past were now flitting away into nothing, wore upon him visibly. One moment he would be at John's side, another he would be absent on the curbstone outside the station. Terrible fits of coughing came upon him.

All this added to the distress of John, who had insisted that Dickson keep his station entirely among the disorderly element at the mill and endeavor to restore the peace that was so essential to the cause of the strikers. He would not reveal, nor had he revealed, either to Dickson or to his brother what he well knew from the revelations made to him by Kate, that the turbulence had in all probability been the effect of the very plans discussed that night on the veranda at Severn's.

Night had now come on. The lamps of the police station were lighted and Richardson, unable in his shame and vexation to eat a morsel since his breakfast, was looking forward to a prisoner's bed, when there was a stir in the crowd near the door. A brisk young man hustled in, Pat O'Donnell, with all the air of one coming to a rescue with mysterious importance.

"Is Mr. John Richardson here?"

"Yes," said an officer. "Do you want to see him?"

"That's what I'm here for."

"There he is—over there."

"That's the gentleman, is it?"

"That's what I said."

"Is your name Richardson, sir?" asked Pat, approaching him.

"Yes."

"John Richardson?"

"Yes."

"Then I've a document for you. You'll please examine its contents."

"Who sends this?" inquired Richardson, looking at the envelope as yet unopened, while Tom looked distrustful.

"You'll please examine the contents, sir."

"Why, Tom!" exclaimed John, suppressing his own excitement.

"Money—one, two, my God, they're thousand dollar bills!"

"Who sent this?"

"Have you examined the contents?"

"Yes, but—"

"Then you'll be excusing me," and with that Pat made his way to the door, the observed of all observers.

"Who sent you, young fellow?" asked an officer.

"Niver mind about its name. It's no matter who it is," responded Pat as he disappeared.

"Sergeant Williams," said the officer, "just have one of the boys follow that smart Alec. Maybe something further'll turn up out of this."

Richardson had little time to reflect. He filed the money with the magistrate next door, was released on condition of subsequent appearance at a preliminary hearing, and hurried to the telephone to let his mother hear in his own voice that he was free again.

The bail, which would be handed back to him on his attending the hearing, he could restore to the friend that sent it, Totten no doubt, or some member of the League.

CHAPTER XLI

MRS. SEVERN by Friday began to recover from the shock of that cruel Thursday morning. The sensational behavior of Kate at the card party and the father's terrible rage against the daughter were indeed a tonic. The stepmother now felt better, soothed by soft bromide and gratified resentment. She had even the merit, and gladly could endure the sweet blame, of having tried to shield his erring daughter.

When old Severn, on leaving Kate's boudoir this morning, announced to his spouse, yet in bed, that the girl would be off to Europe in forty-eight hours if her Aunt Emma, as he hoped, could be forced to take her, she murmured her sympathy for him, adding that in the great trial of his patience, she would forgive his angry words of the night before. How much did she wish, good wife that she was, to be able to see Wallowell also go abroad to enjoy with his wife the rest he so much needed. But that, with this strike to torment him, was clearly impossible.

Thus she lay in bed until three forming a plan of action. Shortridge must not know about the scandalous Nora, since, should he hear that such a secret was at large, he would undoubtedly diminish his attentions to the wife of his employer. Let Kate and Nora be gone, he could continue without gossip and without alarm. All that now weighed heavily on

her soul was Nora's allusion to a third person who was, she had hinted, a witness, but this person too would probably have cause to keep quiet. The worst, at any rate, appeared to have passed.

Shortridge, arriving at four to report to Severn the condition of affairs, was in a somewhat perturbed frame of mind. The strike had grown worse. He had to confess also that Kate had been too quick for him in collecting the cash part of her legacy, a mistake that caused the father, who had tried to forestall her, infinite vexation.

After some talk Shortridge and Severn joined Mrs. Severn, who had invited them to tea in one of the larger rooms downstairs, where she was reclining on a couch.

"You've been through such a hard time, I understand!" said Shortridge.

"You know, Mr. Shortridge, what we've all been through here. I'm not speaking of the strike. That's a small matter compared with something else."

"I'm willing to admit right here," Severn remarked, "while I've been very much out of humor with Miriam about it, I'm satisfied now she did the best she could under all the circumstances. She treated that girl nicely enough for anybody. It's me that's got the most ungrateful child that ever lived. That strike on right now, that very strike, has been hashed up badly by her having something to do with this good-for-nothing, common whelp across the way here. Not out yet, is he? Hasn't got any bail?"

"No, and I don't think he'll get any. We fixed it high enough to hold him this time, I think."

"From what I hear," remarked Mrs. Severn, "the

fellow behaved just the way those low brutes always do."

"Scandalously, Mrs. Severn."

"I don't see what you were doing there! Why didn't you break in and give him a slap or two?" said Severn.

"Well, you see it's this way. I was afraid it might complicate affairs more for you. We've got to be politic, so to speak," replied Shortridge, coloring.

"Seems to have been pretty handy with his fists, the skunk!" Severn continued. "I don't see why Kate isn't home yet. But if he's locked up behind steel bars, I guess we'll have no trouble on that score for awhile."

Mrs. Severn shuddered, the very mention of such things being terrible to nerves like hers, and speaking to Shortridge in a low voice she remarked, "The girl's not a bad one, you know, in her way, but there's a common streak there—from the mother, I think."

"Well, she'll be off to Europe all right, Shortridge, in about two days, if I'm not mistaken, and if her Aunt Emma won't consent to take her there, I'll find somebody that will. Cousin Julia maybe will go. Emma will be here in a little bit. Said she'd be here between five and six."

"I do hope so!" remarked the wife, and then in a low tone again to Shortridge, "A stupid old horror, that sister of Wallowell's! She wears on me dreadfully."

"I hope to God I'll never have to pass through anything like what I went through last night," continued Severn. "I don't believe a man could stand that sort of thing more than once in his life. I couldn't look

one of those people in the face after that girl's behaving that way, standing up for a wharf-rat like that one. But here's Emma now. Come in, Emma—been waiting for you. You know Mr. Shortridge here, don't you?"

"Why, dear Aunt Emma!" cried Mrs. Severn in the voice of one too weak to rise. "You'll excuse my not getting up, won't you? But I've been waiting so impatiently for you!"

"Sorry you're not well," replied her sister-in-law a little coolly.

"Oh, we've been through such dreadful things here. I was just saying to Wallowell that you were the only person that had the tact and sense to handle Kate at all."

"I do think I can do something with her," Aunt Emma replied, a little mollified.

"You're the only person that can," Mrs. Severn repeated. "Now you've got to take dinner with us—I won't hear you say no. We want to talk everything over with you and have your fullest and best advice."

"I hadn't intended to stay at all, thank you," the other replied, thawing gradually.

"Oh, yes, you've got to stay," broke in Severn. "We've got to talk things over here fully. You've got to take that girl to Europe and take her quick!" Then he launched out upon the affair of the night before, sparing Kate in no way and making everything worse in a thousand particulars, during all which discourse Mrs. Severn did not fail to ply Aunt Emma with many encouraging glances, some of them artfully directed toward the lady's gown, of which she seemed to approve.

"And now, Aunt Emma," resumed Mrs. Severn when the whole narrative was ended, "we want your advice on the whole situation. We may be wrong about this now, and maybe we are wrong in insisting that she go at once to Europe, but we leave it all to you. Another cup of tea, won't you, dear? You'll have one, won't you?"

"You might fill it again, thank you," replied Aunt Emma, unable to resist the leader of fashion. "But as to going to Europe all of a sudden like this, why—"

"Why, you've got to go, that's what," old Severn interrupted. "You've just got to go. You see the situation. Of course, you go at my expense and no limit on money. But you go now."

"Well, but, Wallowell, it's got to be considered," objected the sister.

"I thought of giving you a nice little luncheon here just before you go," resumed Mrs. Severn, "just calling in a few of our best friends and making it, so to speak, a nice family affair."

"I suppose one ought to do one's duty," said Aunt Emma with a sigh, "but it's very hard, it's so sudden."

"I'm glad to hear you speak of duty," Mrs. Severn resumed, "because I've always felt that you were a person to whom that appealed. You see, don't you, dear—you see here the situation that we're in—here's your brother in the most deplorable condition, utterly unable, practically, to leave the house, and shut up in this dreadful America with all these strikes, and here am I who wouldn't leave him now for the world with all this excitement around him—who else is there

—who is there so near to us, so close to us that we can appeal to except yourself? She's got to go—of course, she's got to go, you see that—it's better for her, better for Kate herself, the poor girl!"

"Yes, the poor girl!" exclaimed Aunt Emma. "And here she is now. Hush! Don't let's say anything."

The pale subject of this conversation now made her appearance in the doorway, whence she would have withdrawn had she not seen her Aunt Emma. Changing her purpose, she bowed pleasantly to her aunt and stood for a moment uncertain what to do. Everybody was embarrassed, Mrs. Severn the most so, as this was their first meeting since her shame.

"Won't you join us?" asked Aunt Emma.

"I think not, thank you."

"You look very tired, Kate, dear," observed Mrs. Severn at last.

"I am, thank you."

"Take this chair," said Shortridge, pushing forward a very comfortable one, while old Severn cast not one look upon the girl.

"No, thank you, Mr. Shortridge."

"I've consented to stay to dinner, Kate," said Aunt Emma. "I want to talk over with you some matters we've been discussing here."

"What is it, Aunt Emma?"

"Well, um—I don't know whether—shall I, just now, Wallowell?"

"Don't ask me," grunted the latter.

"Why, it's about going to Europe, Kate," said the aunt. "Your father's desire is that we go—"

"Miss Kate, Miss Kate!" came in a low whisper outside the curtains. Kate turning beheld Nora almost

dancing with glee. "He's out! Pat's got him out, the bye!"

"Tell her the North German Lloyd has a sailing Tuesday morning—the *Cecilie*," muttered Severn to his wife.

"Yes, Aunt Emma, what?" asked Kate, her face changing color in her fluctuating feelings.

"We want to know if you'll go Tuesday morning."

"Tuesday morning!" the girl repeated in the weariness of one nearly worn out by two sleepless nights and three racking days.

"The *Cecilie*, Kate, perfectly lovely boat," observed Mrs. Severn, "isn't it, Mr. Shortridge?"

"Charming."

"We'll talk it over. You think about it. We'd leave here Monday night. This is Friday," the aunt resumed.

"We needn't talk about it further," replied the niece, as one who, having accomplished something, though she had parted with her lover, was at last exhausted and wanted only peace.

"But, Kate, dear—"

"It's not necessary, Aunt Emma, because—because I can answer you now. We'll go."

CHAPTER XLII

EXULTING in his brother's release, Tom Richardson would not be restrained, though nearly exhausted, from rejoining his comrades at Severn's mills, nor could John do otherwise than remain at his side to protect him in quarrels and to pick him up if he should faint from weakness.

There had assembled in front of the gates a noisy mob out of which arose hoarse cries and awful oaths, the screams of women and the commands of the police. Occasionally a pistol shot would be heard, then silence, then a horrifying wail. The armed force at the gate now beat back the wave of heads and arms, now sank back before it only to charge again. Stones flew overhead, knives flashed in the dismal light, a hellish din filled the air with blasphemy and rage and hate, while the authorities of law and order poured in rattling, clanging loads of armed policemen to beat their way with clubs and revolvers and relieve the guarded gates.

In the edges of the throng wounded men lay gasping in the gutters, their heads resting upon the curbstones, or, dragged to some threshold or pile of steel, they were lapped by ragged, frenzied women, whose pity mingled with their rage. Horses ran away, great wagons were overturned, crash followed crash of broken windows and of falling barriers amid yells of joyous hate.

Swift among the crowds moved the leaders of the strikers, jerking back their followers, entreating some, cursing others, pleading, commanding and arguing, beseeching each swaying drop of those angry waves to subside for the sake of God. The wretched workmen lashed up to madness by the treachery of some of their class, and by the villainy of others whom they detected to be thugs hired to push them into strife, were lost to every voice except that of revenge.

It was midnight when Tom Richardson sank panting on a doorstep, where he was found by his brother, himself exhausted. John, raising him to his feet, staggered five weary squares to a line of street cars, whence by some transfers he bore him to the cottage. The brother fell upon a bed; he gasped, he faintly groaned, he sighed and sank into a grievous stupor. The old mother with John applied such restoratives as could be had at home until a physician brought to their succor the stimulants of science. Toward daylight he revived, but by ten the doctor sadly advised them that Tom was a dying man. He might, perhaps, live two or three days, during which, as a desperate chance if some gain in strength accrued, they might send him to Colorado to gasp its invigorating air.

Tired though he was, John Richardson hurried to the city, seeking the one friend who had money, Darius Totten. The latter, having returned from Johnstown, deplored the riots, which, however, had subsided, and then felicitated his young friend on his prowess with his fists.

"I'm afraid I'm not a true Christian," exclaimed the old man. "I couldn't help chuckling when I read

about it. Out of a job, eh? Of course you can't go back to Hagan's office."

"Not exactly," John replied with a sad smile. "What I was—"

"No matter for that, my boy. So much the better! I guess there's somebody else in this town that's got a few dollars beside that Locksport and Severn crowd. I've got some legal business, got some just now myself, a fairly good piece of work. Know some other fellows here that need a bright chap like you. What makes you so blue?"

"Thank you, thank you, Mr. Totten, I—"

"Cheer up, then!"

"Oh, Mr. Totten, it's a sad morning for me, I'm sorry to say. My brother Tom is dying." He buried his face in his hands.

"Oh, dear, dear! not dying?"

"Yes—no hope. A little perhaps—Colorado."

"Dear, dear! Brace up now. What's—well, I know, consump—"

"Consumption."

"Too bad, my boy. Colorado, eh?—Colorado—"

"Mr. Totten, what I came to trouble you about is this. I hate to bother you, but I feel perhaps you might be willing—to—to buy a piece of property from me. I've got to raise money immediately for my brother."

"Yes, yes, I see."

"I've a little home out here. Perhaps you—it's next to Wallowell Severn's."

"I remember it—a little brown house, isn't it, with trees and yellowish trimmings—"

"Yes, with trees—"

"Never mind now. Don't be feeling so bad, son. Want me to buy it?"

"Yes, there's a mortgage on it due now, but, I suppose, easily extended. If I can get the difference on the basis of eight thousand for the whole, that would leave me a few thousand."

"I'll lend you the money and—"

"No, no, no loan. If you will buy it, I'm sure you can't lose."

The old man having argued kindly with him to no purpose, finally said cheerily: "I'll buy it, then. About an acre or so of land, as I remember it. Ought to be worth eight thousand. Want the money at once?"

"Thank you, yes. The title must be searched and—"

"Oh, here's a thousand now and you get the rest when the title's proved sound and I get the deed. Here, boy. I'm fearfully busy somehow to-day. I suppose that other crowd'll be saying that that old lunatic Totten's crazier than ever to-day, I'm so busy stirring things up."

Richardson, his voice choked with emotion, thanked the generous old man with a hearty grasp of the hand, adding:

"This is not the only thing I have to thank you for—my bail, you know."

"Bail—me!"

"Yes, last night. I have no doubt it came from you, the five thousand dollars."

"Wish it had. It surely would have if I'd been in town. No, not me, son."

"Then I have another friend somewhere."

"Left no name, Richardson? How did it come to you?"

"Some young man hurried in, refused to answer any questions, and was out while we—we didn't know whether we were on our heads or heels with joy. I telephoned to mother and the fellow was gone. The morning newspapers seem to be nonplussed, too. I supposed it was from you."

"No, sir, not from me, that's sure."

"Well, when the money's released, I suppose they'll send me word to refund it. Good-by for the morning, Mr. Totten."

Thoughts of the dying brother filled his mind on the way home. He could think no longer who his kind deliverer might be, but justice in some degree was done her, since in all the pain and horror of those hours he thought of Kate Severn, of his love for her, and the joy he hoped it would give her to read in the newspapers that he had been saved from the miseries of a jail.

CHAPTER XLIII

WHEN old Severn, kept awake until near day-break by those who telephoned him the progress of the riot, awoke the next day to read in the newspapers that, though his mills had been saved from wreck and fire, Richardson had been bailed by an unknown person, he was again in a rage. That old knave, Totten, he swore, was probably at the bottom of it, but soon correcting himself, to do that person less justice, he declared that this addled fool could not have been the deliverer, since he would have been sure to run to the papers with the news. John being now at large, Kate was exposed anew, it was clear, to this prowling fox Richardson, for whom her father had even sweeter appellations, skunk, maggot, toad, hawk, snake, and worm.

The old fellow now became vigilant as well as agile. When Kate was late in rising he had a hundred questions to ask as to the delay, wishing to know whether she was certainly in her rooms and adding that, when she came out, she be given to understand by some one, who would stoop to speak to her, that she was not to go down town at all, but to stay indoors and prepare for the journey. All the while he would keep an eye on Richardson's cottage, lest that gentleman be sneaking about the grounds.

As for the fair object of so much concern and ill humor, she arose about ten from a heavy sleep, that

had not begun until three in the morning, unhappy, listless, and indifferent to her father's blame or forgiveness. She, too, scanned eagerly the morning prints, trembling lest, in the violence of that night, Richardson should have been in peril or be listed among the many wounded. Often did she look sadly at the cottage, to descry between the trees or over the hedge the forms that moved about so much, unaware as she was of Tom Richardson's illness and the return of John at mid-day. Reluctantly beginning to pack her trunks, she would mope an hour at a time, leaving the disagreeable tasks to whimpering Nora.

Meanwhile Mrs. Severn had arisen early. What she had now most to apprehend was that either the rage or the forgiveness of Severn might yet stay the departure of his daughter. The latter humor was too unlikely to be feared, but the former exceedingly probable, since if he should break out in another tempest, the girl, having spirit enough to refuse to be driven, might change her mind that had so fond a preference now for her native land. Running into Kate's rooms from time to time, she would offer assistance in her preparations, or urge a cup of tea, dropping the suggestion that, shocked at her husband's abusive temper toward the girl, she must venture to suggest that Kate avoid him to the last. Then she would give similar advice to Severn himself, not failing to hint that the daughter was intimating no desire to see him.

About two o'clock this Saturday afternoon Watcles approached Mrs. Severn with a knowing look, extending a noon-day journal that had just arrived.

"You'll hexcuse me, Mrs. Severn, but Hi thought

perhaps you'd like to 'eve this drawn to your hattention."

The lady glanced hastily at a paragraph which announced that Richardson's bailor had been discovered to be one Pat O'Donnell, janitor in the Jones Building, who had refused to answer questions and who was quite without means of his own.

"Well?"

"Ahem—mum, but hit's me duty to tell you that this O'Donnell person's a-waitin' on Nora 'ere."

"Ah!"

"Yes, mum, and Hi was thinkin', mum, that perhaps Mr. Severn, as a matter of duty on our part, ought to—"

"Now just stop a minute. Not a word of this to Mr. Severn—"

"Certainly, mum. Very good—"

"Nor to anybody else, you hear?"

"Very good, mum."

She would have dismissed him, but feeling that he would have more reason to keep his mouth shut from dislike of Nora than from a sense of obedience, she added:

"Such news might provoke Mr. Severn to a scene with Miss Kate and I can't say but she might change her mind if there should be angry words."

"Very good, mum."

"And in a day or two she'll take this disagreeable Nora out of the house with her. I am very anxious that she and her father become reconciled again."

"Very good, mum. Not a word, mum, from me, not a word."

At this juncture Aunt Emma arriving, hurried con-

sultations were resumed about the voyage, the ship, the hotels, the mails, and the profound trust each had in the other. Mrs. Severn would express the most charitable views as to Kate, while Aunt Emma would admit that every woman has her trials. Mrs. Severn was sorry she had always seen so little of Aunt Emma, while Aunt Emma discovered that Mrs. Severn was the simplest person in the world to understand. She would air her French a trifle in the half dozen sentences she knew how to utter; would say, for example, *Je ne sais pas* with great ease in the best accent of a local French club to hear the greater dame's response in pure and undefiled Parisian acquired in the best company abroad from bankrupt dukes and tipsy ladies who, boozing nightly with princes, lament democracy and the decay of manners. Then with a word to Kate she would hurry home to her own preparations, this being Saturday, for the start on Monday evening.

All the while the uneasiness of Severn increased to such a degree that he caused even the telephone to be guarded, busying himself with fretful suspicions and trivial suggestions. He would rather, he vowed, lose one of his mills than that that cur should have another look at his daughter, whom he would thereupon disinherit into the bargain. Looking frequently at the cottage and seeing persons moving about within its grounds, he finally caused Wattles to follow him in a stroll toward the pagoda, hobbling with the aid of a cane and relieving his spleen with mumbled epithets. Above all things did he desire to fall in with Richardson and to give him, as he expressed it, a damned good piece of his mind.

Such good fortune was at length afforded him, for

he had scarcely reached the border of his place at the pagoda gate, when he perceived a short distance within Richardson's grounds, that gentleman himself musing on a seat while, his mind absorbed, he absently toyed the dog Trot with his foot.

"Oh, you're there, are you?" called the old man, red as a turkey-cock.

Richardson looked up and, recognizing Severn, arose in some surprise.

"You're there, are you? Damn you!" repeated the eminent citizen. "If you ever set foot in this place of mine, I'll have you beaten like a dirty cur."

Richardson approached the spot, some ten yards distant, quite at a loss what to say, but resolved to face one who could address him in this fashion.

"And if I catch you sneaking about my daughter again, you shameless skunk, I'll make it worse for you than we will for your trying to burn down my mill last night."

"See here," replied John, now at the gate, "I have said nothing to you. What's the cause of this?"

"You, you infernal hypocrite. Don't come strutting down here to threaten me, you dynamiter."

"Mr. Severn, you're too old a man for—"

"Oh, ho, so that's it, is it, you cowardly puppy? I'll make an example of you."

"Pshaw! Mr. Severn, go back to your house. I have no explanations to make you." John would like to have given him a hearty piece of abuse or even a mild kick, but it was Kate Severn's father that was raging before him. While these salutations were exchanging, Wattles, having passed through the gate, exclaimed with an expression of contempt:

"You'll please not be blocking the gate 'ere. Stand haway."

This served Richardson, as may be surmised, with a sudden vent for his feelings, and, though he disdained to strike the creature, he seized him so quickly by the collar as to despatch him back through the gate almost head over heels, during which feat the master in a loud wrath began to brandish his stick. Here came in a new party to these pleasantries, the bulldog Trot. The latter with the composure characteristic of this species, had been vigilantly watching the progress of the affair with an eye to the point at which he might be needful. Especially had he observed the fat carcass of old Severn, his ample flanks, his inviting calves, so upon the old gentleman's menacing John with the cane, Trot at one bound contrived to fasten himself upon Severn in the rear, honest dog, and, burying his jaws in one of those portly hams, he closed his eyes and seemed to fall asleep there, sweet brute, only shaking his pendant body from time to time as if to be assured that he held himself secure in so rare a spot.

No sooner was this little catapult launched into him from behind than stout Severn was struck with terror. He groaned, he staggered, bellowed hoarse with fear, turned one way, then another with pudgy arms uplifted, and in vain endeavored to reach the dog with his hands, all the while white with terrible pain.

"Take him off! off, I say. Help, help, help!"

Wattles, for his part, stood timidly by until the fat master yelled again:

"Can't you pull him off? What are you standing there for? Oh, oh! Help, help!"

Wattles now venturing to lay hands on Trot's ribs, the latter opened one of his faithful eyes, which alone sufficed to scare the butler back ten feet.

"Beat him! Take the cane to him!"

"Cawn't you 'elp Mr. Severn there, you, sir?" cried Wattles to Richardson.

"I'm not permitted to enter your grounds," replied John with grim humor, undecided how long to let Trot feast in the juicy thigh.

"Take him off. You're killing me. Oh—oh! Are you going to let him murder me there?"

Not without a struggle did Richardson unlock the grip of Trot and pull him back to his own side of the hedge, nor will the reader fail to observe that here again, as in the case of Mamie Frale's Toto, the canine instinct is exquisitely illustrated and that, as the refined Toto had a disagreeable nose for the humble, so Trot for the rich and great. The latter, now quite satisfied, returned to the house, where he stretched himself on the porch to lick his peaceful chops.

Severn, the lighter by Trot's weight, emitting moans and dripping sweat, now beat a slow retreat with anxious looks behind like a good general protecting his rear. From time to time he cursed the cowardly Wattles and, pausing at a safe distance, Sir Hudibras would brandish his cane at the cottage while the servant wiped his bleeding hip and irritated an ugly wound in that sensitive quarter until his master howled anew. These bellowings and complaints had already brought out a number of persons from the mansion, all of whom believed Severn from his lamentations as good as dead. They carried him indoors, sent madly for a physician, and had his wife without delay at his side,

while Wattles gave out a tale of ambush near the dynamiter's cottage, of blows, dogs, and missiles from a nest of strikers headed by anarchist Richardson himself.

Dr. Pangloss Smith was not to be had, so the family was forced to content itself with an old suburban practitioner, Dr. MacGregor, who lacked that delicacy of address indispensable to modern patients in silk pajamas.

"Turn over, can't you?" said he to the prostrate Croesus.

"You're hurting me!"

"Let me look at it. Um! Good hearty bite!"

"Oh!"

"Whose dog was it?"

"These scoundrels' next door—these Richardson—"

"Oh, I know that terrier. You needn't be fussing about it."

"Fussing! He's made a meal off me."

"Yes, but it's a good healthy dog."

"Healthy! Oh—ouch!"

"What I mean is, you needn't be worrying about hydrophobia and all that."

"Hydrophobia! My God!"

"You'll be all right now. Just stop worrying. All you need is half a dozen stitches here—"

"Oh! Oh, when I get up again, I'll—you're killing me! It's raw there! Oh, that girl, she's dragged me in the dust! Keep that cursed Wattles out of here, the blubbering booby! The snivelling coward, with both his hands free and me with only one free on account of my cane!—Oh—Get out, you brute!"

Wattles, feeling it indelicate to remain after this

suggestion, went out in great dudgeon to vent his temper according to the fixed habit of mankind on those beneath him, while the doctor pleasantly completed his work upon Severn's fat amid whispering and the anxious looks of such as were permitted to stand by.

"You'll be all right in a day or two," he said, as he left the room. "Just keep him quiet, Mrs. Severn. Good day!"

As he was passing down the stairs he was met by Kate, who, alarmed at the accounts she had heard of her father's wound and unable yet to be certain whether John Richardson had taken part in the affair at all, was impatiently expecting a word from the physician. She followed him to the outer steps.

"You're quite sure there's no danger, doctor?"

"Tut, no! Nothing at all. By the way, can I get to Richardson's by a short cut here? Let me see!"

"Are you going there?"

"Yes. Have to go there too. This way?"

"Yes, by that path and around that clump of bushes—to the pagoda there across the hedge. Some one is ill there?"

"Yes—bad case too. Dying."

"Dying—dy—who—?"

"Richardson—no hope. Oh, he'll last a day or two, poor fellow. This path? Got to hurry. Good day." Dr. MacGregor cast no look behind as he strode across the lawn. She made a gesture as if to stop him, but was unable to utter a sound until he was beyond her voice. That it might be Tom Richardson who was ill did not, of course, occur to her, for she knew him to reside elsewhere.

Disturbed by the riots of the night before and the

newspaper accounts of the killed and injured, she could only conclude that in some fresh brawl a mischievous had befallen John. She stood stupefied a moment, then slowly with a vacant look returned to her rooms upstairs.

"Terrible, this house, mum!" said Nora. "Oh, it's terrible. Shall I put this scarf in this trunk, mum, or in this?"

"Oh, don't ask me, Nora! There, yes."

"And this bag, mum, I suppose ye'll be wantin' it in your room aboard? I don't see why they have to have these trunks and things in New York a day ahead, them steamship people! Sure, mum, you're lookin' too desperate for anything! I wouldn't worry about this dog business—"

"Oh, Nora, Nora, whom can I talk to but you? Oh, Nora, he's—he's dying—!"

"Dying! Holy Mother! Your father?"

"No, no! Mr. Richardson."

"The saints forbid! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! And whin and who said—"

"Nora, here! You must—you must let him have one word from me before—here, take this rose, Nora. Take it to his mother if you can't put it in his own hands—"

"Oh, the dear man!"

"Go now, Nora. Ask his mother when I can see him. Let me know. Quick, dear Nora!"

"Holy Mother, what a day!"

Saying this, the maid flew down the stairs, but having the sense to fear that a direct course to Richardson's would be noticed, she took a longer way with as little outward show of haste as possible, leaving

the house on the side farthest from the cottage and in an opposite direction. Outside the boundaries of the estate on that side, she turned abruptly to the river, which being reached, she started back along the bank in the direction of the cottage and then up the path to the pagoda, a circumnavigation that put her out of breath. She paused only a moment before approaching the cottage door.

CHAPTER XLIV

SCARCELY had the doctor left the house when the drawing stitches began to exasperate still more the mind of Severn, who having already sent for Shortridge, swore he would this very hour execute a will that would cut off his daughter without a penny. To her he laid this final humiliation as much as if she had maliciously concocted it or bred this dog five years before to bite him now. The pain, the shame before his servants, the grins, as he imagined, of Richardson, all added fuel to a rage sufficiently fanned up by his daughter's love for his enemy no less than by the riot at the mills.

Nobody could keep him in bed. Getting out in some fashion like a crab he made his way to a safe in which lay a will made some months before and this he vowed should be torn to shreds as soon as Shortridge could copy some of its provisions that were intended for grateful beneficiaries and not for shameless daughters. Nay, more, he would call Kate before him and in the presence of witnesses sign and seal the document forever. In the midst of this his spouse, like a policeman in a mob, was fearful either to check or to precipitate his fury. Should he cut Kate off in the will, the stepmother would be happy indeed, but should his wrath force a scene with the girl, there was no predicting the immediate consequences, the least of which would be the abandoning

of the trip to Europe, and the worst such a burst of temper from the injured girl as might carry with it a terrible secret. From any point of view she desired peace.

Shortridge arrived not late upon the heels of the physician and at the same time Aunt Emma, though not summoned, dropped in to consult about the details of departure. The three discussed downstairs the outrageous conduct of Trot, but agreed that Severn's rage must soon subside and that the making of his will had best be deferred just three short days. To all this Aunt Emma lent willing suggestions. The best thing to do was that Mr. Shortridge go upstairs, quiet her brother by putting him off and then come down again before he could renew his rampage. Shortridge going upstairs to accomplish this stroke of diplomacy, the two ladies awaited him below.

"That fearful dog!" exclaimed Mrs. Severn. "I've had to cancel my luncheon engagements for Monday—Wallowell's condition, you know."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, I'm so sorry—disappointed to death about it."

"I thought you said," observed the disappointed Aunt Emma, who distrusted the other's motives in withdrawing this social promotion, "that there was nothing serious with Wallowell."

"Yes and no—not serious—of course, I appreciate your disappointment and I too am—"

"Oh, don't mind me a bit. I'm sure I don't care. You know I really shouldn't have had time on our last day—"

"Why, yes,—I felt that way, but I did so wish—"

"Don't speak of it further," rejoined the older lady,

much vexed, for she had mentioned with concealed pride to several friends the farewell luncheon as "a family affair of ours with only the Ringers, the Hollivers, and a few of that set." They chatted for a few moments with affected gayety and simulated fervor over the voyage until Shortridge reappeared.

"I asked him to excuse me a minute while I got some writing materials together. He's in one confounded bad humor, but—"

"Why here he comes now!" Aunt Emma exclaimed.

"Oh, Wallowell!" cried the wife. "Why don't you stay upstairs?"

"Oh, you're all trying to shield her! Trying to put me off! You'll not succeed, though! Send for that girl!"

"Now, Wallowell!"

"Send for her! Here, you fellow!" he said to a man servant, "run up and tell my daughter to come down here at once."

"My dear Mr. Severn," remonstrated Shortridge.

"None of that, no smooth talk. I'm down here for business. Here's this will that won't last ten minutes longer—" He tore open the envelope. "Get that paper and pen now and sit down at that table. You stay here, Emma. You're set down for something. Go on, Shortridge."

"Why, I can't finish up legally here—"

"Yes, you can—I know better. You told me so yourself. We don't need any notary and that sort of thing. You'll just write it out and I'll sign it. You sit over there, Miriam, and keep quiet. Now, then, you've got your pen, have you? Oh, here she is at last. Tell her to sit down. Tell her to keep her ears

open and her mouth shut and you all listen. I want plenty of witnesses to this. There'll be no after-claps, no suits on this business if I know what I'm doing. She's dragged me in the dust! These anarchists can even set their dogs on me."

"Am I wanted here, Mrs. Severn?" asked Kate.

"Oh, I don't know, I—"

"Yes, you do know—tell her I'm cutting her off in this will without a penny!"

"You have my consent, then," replied the daughter, who without another word walked out of the room.

"Oh, ho, so that's her way, is it? All right, Miss Cat, Miss Dog, Miss Skunk! Oh, she'll feel it well and good yet. She'll bite her fingers off yet with shame. She'll be on her knees to me yet on those front steps out there, damn her! Are you ready?"

"Yes, if you say so," Shortridge replied.

"Then, first, say that I leave everything I've got—now this in no legal clap-trap, but just plain English—to my wife Miriam here and to the boy—except—" here he waited while Shortridge wrote—"except the bequests from the old will here that I'm going to allow—"

"Yes, proceed if you please now—"

"To Emma here—how much was it? I can't find the place in these infernal long-winded 'saids' and 'aforesaids' of yours, Shortridge—anyway it was fifty thousand dollars."

Aunt Emma almost rose from her chair at the mention of this pittance out of forty millions. She looked about, raised her hand and then settled back in her chair.

"Here's the clause," said Shortridge, who had run

over the original. "Here. It was one hundred thousand."

"Well, let it go at fifty," broke in Severn. "Fifty's enough—she doesn't care for it anyway—"

"Oh, not at all!" ironically remarked the sister.

"I can take good care of you, Aunt Emma, out of mine," added Mrs. Severn.

"Oh, thank you. I guess I don't need benevolence just yet. I'm no pauper."

"I wish this whole business could be post—" the other lady replied.

"Well, you needn't be grumbling there, Emma," the brother interrupted, "you don't need either sum and you know it—you're older than I am, anyway, you can't live forever."

"What are you putting me down there for anything for, if you think I'm so old I'll not live to get it?"

"Oh, that's it, is it—you expect to get it, eh? You think you're going to outlive me. Umph! By God, such a family!"

"Oh, shut up with your will and take it to the grave with you then," cried Aunt Emma, flouncing out of the room.

"Oh, ho! Very good! So we'll just cut her out too. It's simplifying things pretty fast here. Just drop her out!"

"Oh, give her something, Wallowell."

"Now just hold your tongue, Miriam. This is my business."

"But for peace, let her get off to Europe and then you can do as you please."

"I'll wait on nobody. I'm not the waiting kind, me

—here! There's five thousand for that brute Wattles. Just knife that out too."

Here a giggling was heard behind the portieres, whence it in a moment appeared that several domestics had not failed to attend so agreeable a scene without the cost of admission necessary at a theater. Among these creatures being the unpopular Wattles himself, the joy of the others could not be repressed, but being now perceived, they were at once scattered by their own fear and command of the master. Wattles alone remained, too proud or too late to flee, as Mrs. Severn suddenly drew back the curtains that had concealed the audience.

"Mr. Severn," said he haughtily, "Hi was just a comin' to hinform you that Hi'm leavin' your 'ouse."

"Get out of it then—now!"

"Hi'll not be kicked hout, sir, of hany 'ouse when Hi've been the faithful keeper of secrets hinvolver the family 'onour." Mrs. Severn turned pale.

"Let us avoid a—"

"Out of the house, you cheese-faced cow!" roared Severn. "Brown, there! You! Pull that brute out or I'll call for the police."

"Get out, Wattles," added Shortridge.

"Ho, you, his it?" cried Wattles. "You with the whisperin' that's goin' hon 'ere hall day hand night habout you hand—"

"Get out, I say."

"—And the mistress of this 'ouse, you a reflectin'—"

"I'll put you in the penitentiary," Severn broke in. "Take hold of him there, Brown." Here a junior flunky, who had come in upon this racket, began with

heartily hold to drag Wattles out in a zeal that was born of expected promotion.

"Hand your daughter a keepin' company hand a bailin' hout of jail this low thing, Richardson—" But by this time he was carried off.

"What's all this stomachful of slander mean!" cried Severn, hobbling about.

"She bailed him out!" ejaculated Shortridge, quickly shifting inquiry.

"Bailed him!" echoed Mrs. Severn faintly.

"Eh? Bailed him? Oh, ho! So help me God, I see it!" roared Severn. "I see it. That money of her mother's! Oh, ho!"

"Exactly, Mr. Severn. She was too quick in my office. Got—"

"Now, God have mercy on her, that girl! Here, I'll find her—I'll find her!"

They tried to stay him, but in vain, for he had gone into convulsions had they held him back. Hobbling, with curses, whines, and choking, he began to ascend the stairs. The wife was at his heels, desperate at the possible consequences of his rage. To her the daughter might well lay all this new trouble, the disinheriting, the betrayal of the bailing, and, in an anger equal to his, cry out the greater scandal of the house. There was to be dreaded, too, the uncontrollable Nora, who, about to quit the roof, had nothing to lose and resentment to gratify.

In Kate's suite of rooms, meanwhile, Aunt Emma had been venting her vexation also without noticing the profound sadness of her niece, who thought neither of fortune nor of Europe, but of a dying lover.

"Humph!" quoth the aunt, "to Europe! You can

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“Descended for the last time the stairs of her father’s house.”

just stop your packing. I'm taking nobody anywhere against their will." Kate made no comment.

"Robbing you too! A nice tool she was making of me! Oh, I saw through her all the while—she didn't fool me, the two-faced thing! I fancy I played the game of diplomacy about as smoothly as she did—well, what do you want here, Lucille? Keep out of here. You needn't hurry this packing. Miss Severn's changed her mind. Run out! Oh, here you are, Mrs. Severn! What do you want, Wallowell?"

"I know what I want. Where is she? So you bailed him out, did you? Speak out—don't stand skulking there!" Kate arose, pale, composed, but past all anger. "Yes."

"Out of my house forever!"

"What's this?" cried Aunt Emma. "Stop your roaring so loud."

"Out, I say!"

"Oh, Wallowell!"

"Out, I say! You've protected her long enough, Miriam. I'll throw you out too if you say—out, here, you!"

"I'm going, sir," the daughter responded calmly, picking up a hat.

"It's not my fault, Kate, I swear it!" cried Mrs. Severn.

"I'm not blaming you, Mrs. Severn. Hand me that coat, please, Aunt Emma. Come."

"Will you stop your bellowing, Wallowell? What's this new tantrum about? Come, Kate, I'll give you a decent roof."

"Decent?" Severn cried in a fury. "There you go too! Repeating the dirty hints that that girl has been

circulating, I suppose, and her low-lived maid. Before you leave this house, you hussy, you'll say right here that you've been lying about your stepmother. Answer me now!"

"I have not lied about her."

Mrs. Severn's face was a picture of terror.

"You lie! You lie!" the father cried. "You're afraid to repeat a word of your cursed hints. Have you a word to say against her before you leave this house?"

"Oh, Wallowell, for God's sake, stop!" begged Mrs. Severn.

"Shut up, you! Speak out now, you snivelling, sneaking thing, here. Say it!"

"Not one word, sir. I have not one word of censure or complaint to make. Come, Aunt Emma."

"Out of here, both of you, bag and baggage! Here you Lucille and you other girl, move about here! Throw these bags and trunks out of doors and be quick about it. They belong to that thing there. Pitch 'em out, there!"

Thus he stormed and swore, while the child of his first marriage, a creature of whatever could once have been love in such a breast as his, descended for the last time the stairs of her father's house, her heart half-broken, her cheeks covered with shame, and pitied only by his servants. She hurried across the broad veranda to her aunt's car, and, turning her back upon his palace, buried her face in a corner to repress with clenched hands and set teeth the tears of degradation and woe. Aunt Emma, leaving word only that the luggage be sent to her house, followed her and in a moment they were out of the grounds.

CHAPTER XLV

THESE abominable events were fast succeeding each other at Severn's when Nora ascended the steps of Richardson's porch. The girl, full of the emotions natural to youth and an Irish heart, was quite resolved, should she see John himself, to deliver to him not only the rose but the story of Kate's bailing him, for, though this would be the betrayal of a secret, it could be no wrong to give it to a dying man. Indeed, the creature would have thought it little less than sinful to do otherwise.

Judge, then, her astonishment, when, as she knocked at the half-open door, there stood before her John Richardson himself. She knew his face, but was slow to believe her eyes.

"I am Mr. Richardson."

"Holy Mother!" exclaimed Nora. "John Richardson?"

"Yes."

"You're not dying, thin?"

"Why, no, not exactly—as you see.—I think I know your face—"

"Me name's Nora, Miss Severn's maid, sir. They told her you were dying—"

"It is my brother they meant. He is—very ill."

"God be praised! I mane I'm glad you're safe and well, sir. Miss Severn's going abroad and—"

"Abroad!"

"On Monday, her aunt and her, and being nervous, I suppose, she misunderstood. She sint you this!"

He took the rose but could say nothing for a moment, while Nora gulped down her desire to tell the story of the bail, a secret she no longer dared to give away, not knowing it was at that very moment tattled from one end of the great house to the other, tittered over from kitchen to garret. Again he essayed to speak. He longed to deliver through the maid some expression of love, but this, of course, would not do. Suddenly picking up a small photograph of himself from a table, he said:

"Give this to her, please. Tell her I shall—I shall keep—" Here he became unable to say more.

Nora bowed, her eyes full of tears.

"Just one word," he added; "this miserable affair this morning—her father's acci—"

"The dog, you mane, sir?"

"Yes. Assure her it was not my fault. I don't know how the story was repeated by the man-servant—"

"He couldn't tell the truth if he tried, that wan, Mr. Richardson."

"I feared so and was afraid Mr. Severn was really hurt. I watched him till he reached the house and saw a man helping him on either side—"

"Worse than that, sir, on both sides!"

"Yes. Was he hurt? Our doctor tells us it was a deep bite, but—"

"Sure and he's none the worse, I'm thinkin', though he did lose a gallon or two of blood, they till me, which'll be doing his rheumatism good. I suppose I shouldn't be mintioning it, but as Miss Severn's going

away and looks on you as a frind, Mr. Richardson, it's no impropriety to be saying that her father's been outrageous to her these three or four days past. She'd not have me whisper this to you for the world, sir, but it'll do ye good to know—"

"Oh, tell her—tell her—ask her if it is not possible to see her before—"

"John," said his mother, entering from an inner room, "Tom—"

"Yes, mother—"

"I'll be going, sir, now. I'm very sorry about your brother," said Nora, bowing to Mrs. Richardson and, unaware whether the son desired to confide this kind of a message to his mother, making a hasty departure with the photograph. Richardson looked anxiously at his mother.

"You were going to say, mother, about Tom—"

"I think Tom's a bit better now. He seems to wish to talk. Who was that girl, John?"

"Kate Severn's maid."

"I think you had best chat with Tom, I was going to say," she continued, kindly changing the subject. "But here's Mr. Dickson."

"Good afternoon, John!"

"Glad to see you, Dickson. Sit down. A hard time last night, wasn't it?"

"Terrible! I've just got up. How are you, Mrs. Richardson? I've been looking for Tom."

"He's here, thank you."

"And in bad shape, Dickson, I'm sorry to say."

"Another hemorrhage?"

"Yes, and the heart is weakening."

"Just a bit better now," said Mrs. Richardson

sadly. "The doctor says if he can revive enough to stand a trip to Colorado, there's some hope—"

"I'll step in and see him alone a moment, mother."

Tom, having some return of strength, now asked to be raised on his pillow, whence he talked, not without hope, but as one prepared for the worst.

"I've got a few books, John, that if anything should happen, I want you to give to Dickson—books on government too simple for you, I guess, in my room down town. You know how we like that kind of stuff, we labor people. Dickson never gets enough of it. Another thing, John. I've never talked to anybody about it but you'll understand it, I guess."

Here he paused a moment. "There's a girl I've never mentioned to you. It all came to a head while you were on that trip to Europe, kind of suited each other the minute we saw each other, the two of us."

"Who, Tom?"

Tom again hesitated a moment. "Annie Barclay's her name, a school teacher. You'll find a little book of Burns' poems with her name in it, a present she gave me and I've scribbled mine a few days ago underneath, so, when, if—if my time's got to come, you can just give that back to her. That's one thing. Now, another. I've saved one hundred dollars and kept it for her—"

"Yes, Tom, but you're looking better now, old fellow, so—"

"Yes, but don't forget that, John."

"Never. What happened between you, Tom?"

"Agreed to give it up. I knew—well, she knew—with this blight on me—of course, we hoped awhile and, somehow, I always did believe we'd get to Colo-

rado, you and I, in time. It does work wonders there—or to California.”

A drowsy look came in his eye. “What a dreamy kind of place that must be, mountains and sea! I always wanted, all my life, to spend just one winter on a warm beach in some of those places.”

Once more he looked up. “Annie Barclay’s her name. I’m feeling easier now. I think I’ll sleep.”

Romantic love has long survived the pomp of tournaments. It blooms in attics and tenements, and more real sacrifices are made for woman by shabby clerks behind counters and rough heroes in the mills than ever were recited at the Table Round or sung in Mabinogion and *chanson de geste*.

Again he sank upon his pillow. Colorado? California? Ah, “He never got to Carcassonne.”

CHAPTER XLVI

NORA, as much out of breath in returning as in going, came back to a different house indeed. The gardeners were whispering on the lawn, the chauffeurs had their heads together near the garage, the maids were surrounding Mrs. McFadden in the kitchen.

"What are ye all gassin' about there?" asked Nora.
"What are ye all lookin' at me for that way?"

"And don't you know?"

"Know what, Mrs. McFadden?"

"Why, where have ye bin, child?"

"Nowheres."

"Thin don't ye know? Haven't ye eyes and ears?"

"To the Divil wid all this rigmarole! Mrs. McFadden, and you, Biddy, there, what's wrong? I've bin out the past twinty minits or the like."

"Shall we tell her, Mrs. McFadden?"

"Lave that to me, Biddy. Lave that to me."

"Holy Mother! Wid your long faces, all of you!"

"We're bein' gentle wid you, Nora. Your mistress is thrown out of the house!"

"What!"

"Thrown out, I till ye, kicked out like a dog by her father and her trunks bein' carted away into the bargain."

"And whin—and who—"

"Oh, it's that low-lifed Wattles and his gang upstairs a lyin' all of thim about the swate—"

"But where is she now and what were ye all doin' here, you wid yer big hips and shoulders to stand by a lookin' on! Where's Miss Kate now, I till ye?"

"Gone to her aunt's, Nora. Be patient now—"

"Patient! Oh, I'll show ye all patience, if that's what ye want!"

"Now, don't be—"

"Let me alone, do ye hear, one and all of ye! Who's lookin' after her things?"

"Sure, and I don't know yet but—"

"Do ye mane to say that ye've lift her belongings, trunks full of laces and drawers full of jewels, to the nifty fingers of Lucille and that—"

By this time she was on her way to Kate's apartments, ready to fling aside everybody short of Severn and his wife, both of whom fortunately had gone to another part of the house. She pulled open drawer after drawer, slammed, banged, and searched in a fury of suspicious anger, railed against the household, pushed Lucille on a bed with a hearty thrust, all the while filling a suit-case with trinkets and scraps of finery, and questioning with fiery zeal every unfortunate wench that came into the rooms. Soon she filled another bag, with which as well as the first, she returned in a perspiration to the kitchen.

"You, Bliven, there," she cried to Kate's chauffeur, who was gossiping outside the window, "you're wanted at once here wid the machine."

"An' yer lavin' yer own things behind, Nora?" inquired Biddy. "Ye've not even got a hat on yer head."

"Niver mind me, all o' ye, after yer stannin' by this way, an' that manes you too, Sadie. What are ye doin' down here at this hour, onyway? Are ye lookin' for things to tell upstairs?"

"And that's my business, you ugly bulldozer," retorted Sadie. "It's the first time ye ever worked in a swell family and it'll be—"

"Ye lie, ye dirty clothes-pin! I niver worked for a poor family in me life. I'm better brought up than the likes of you."

"Oh, she's goin' off in the machine like as if it was her own! Well, it's your last ride, you—"

"Now, stop that," interposed Mrs. McFadden, "this is a dacent kitchen so long as I'm here. Good-by, Nora. You'll be back for your things, I suppose, but ye can lave that to me."

Blivens, though uncertain who had yet the right to give commands over Kate's automobile, was soon off with Nora, whom in half an hour he delivered at Aunt Emma's. The maid lost not one instant in seeking her mistress in the room assigned to her, where she found the unhappy young woman in a chair, her outer garments not yet all removed, lost in the saddest of meditations. They embraced each other.

"He's not dead or dyin' and I've brought the rest of your things!"

"Oh, Nora, he's—"

"It's a mistake and it's mesilf that got back to yer rooms in time—"

"A mistake! Never mind the clothes—"

"Yes, it's only his brother that's dyin', poor thing! Here's a silver buckle ye'd left behind—"

"But, Nora, what happened? Stop now—tell me!"

Then the other, interrupted only from time to time by Aunt Emma's chambermaid, who sought to aid them, related the visit to Richardson. The photograph and the news began to restore the color to Kate's cheeks.

"But you didn't know till you got back to the house that—you told him we were going abroad on Monday—"

"Yes, mum."

"So he doesn't know yet that I'm here?"

"To be sure not, mum, but if you could have seen the way he looked when I gave him that rose! And I suppose it's no trouble to be a telephonin' him."

"I'll see, Nora. You've been so quick and brave!"

"And it's me life that's at yer service, Miss Kate, till Pat and me are riddy for housekeepin'—an' ye'll be as happy livin' plainly here wid only two or three servants as ever ye could be wid that scandal-feedin' crowd out there."

Kate now relaxed her mind and heart from the strain of the past five days. Longing to invite Richardson, she hesitated, wondering whether she had not made advances enough. She was happy to know that he was alive.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE next day was Sunday. Kate arose with a lighter heart than she had felt within her during more than a week past. Looking about her little apartment she saw in it at least rest and contentment, and felt that she had a home, for there was a pretty view from the window, and the garden, retaining the expiring bloom of September, was a small plot of ground in which she could stroll. A sense of quiet came over her, of relaxation, repose.

Aunt Emma briskly resumed the topics of Saturday, declaring that everybody would be gadding about this business by Monday and that she, for her part, would be very little disposed to hold her tongue. People should hear what she thought of certain persons. Nobody should make her keep secrets when other people's reputations were to be protected and the town should know what Miriam Severn's reasons were for driving Kate out of her father's house. To arguments like these the girl replied, urging that controversy be dropped. Of discussion she was tired and as to gossip indifferent. She wanted only to be left alone.

With great sorrow she read in the morning newspapers that Tom Richardson had died the night before and that his funeral was set for Monday afternoon. It was to be an affair of considerable pomp among the labor unions, all of which looked upon it as

bringing matters to a crisis between themselves and their employers as well as indicating to the public the scandal and injustice that had hurried him to the grave. The papers published a short history of his life. He was, it was related, a man universally trusted and, notwithstanding much acrimony between labor and capital, had always been honest, had always faithfully kept his word, and to the best of his ability had endeavored to maintain the public peace. It was even admitted that the very malady from which he died had been contracted in excessive hours of work imposed by his employers, and by their not protecting him in accordance with regulations of plain statutes and the dictates of humanity.

During Sunday, too, came not a word from her father's house. Nora would have returned there to carry off other articles left behind, but her mistress commanded her to leave things as they were and not to go back at all. That overtures of any kind would come from her father she had no idea, nor did she desire them. In her inheritance, about fifty thousand dollars, she could have as much comfort as she would need, for of luxury and extravagance she had seen enough to hate them forever.

CHAPTER XLVIII

MONDAY morning also thus passed, and it was late in the afternoon of that day when the silence was first broken between Kate and her relatives. It was Grandmother Severn who appeared. The old lady came in with a brisk gait.

"Why, Kate!" said she. "I've just been over to your father's about this commotion. He's sick abed, in a terrible state."

"Really."

"What do you mean, running away from your father's house?"

"I didn't run away."

"Well, here you are, anyway. What's it all about?"

"Haven't they told you?"

"Yes, in a way, I suppose. I didn't hear it all because the doctor said he positively wouldn't let anybody near him."

"Did Mrs. Severn explain?"

"Why, yes, partly. I'm not going to argue a certain subject just now, child. What I want is to send you back home at once. That's your proper place, especially when your father's sick. What's the use of running away in this foolish fashion?"

"I didn't run away—I was driven out. You know that, don't you?"

"Pshaw! Now, he didn't mean that."

"No?"

"No. That's just his way."

"It's a pretty effective way, it seemed to me—"

"Tut! Tut! You know better, child. Get ready to go back. He'll forgive you."

"He! Will I forgive him?"

"Your father?"

"I have no father."

"You're old enough to have some sense, dear. He's been in a rage twice a day the past twenty years. He didn't mean to drive you away."

"He did everything except to set his dogs on me."

"Oh, you're just a baby, Kitty. Just let this blow over and don't do anything to make things worse. Don't go telling everybody that you've left home and all that."

"They'll find it out soon enough themselves."

"Yes, if you're wicked enough to stay away long, of course they'll find it out. That's what I mean, Kitty. You're not going to break his heart."

"He's tried to break mine."

"Nonsense! It's the way you're feeling about—about that fancy you've taken, I suppose—but let's not talk of this just now, of course. Go home to your father, child, and then take that trip abroad and you'll feel better and so'll your father. It's your duty. You don't want to kill him, do you?"

"Go on, grandma."

"Of course you don't. Now, there's his will. To think of his being crazy enough to try to draw a new will in that tumultuous fashion with his flunkies in the next room swallowing every item. It shows he was

out of his senses. You ought to understand the situation and laugh at it."

"I would laugh if I could cry first."

"Tut! Tut! That's story book talk, that. I just interfered in the whole business, went down to Shortridge's office this morning and asked him if he'd drawn that will yet, and when he said he'd just about got it ready, I said to him, 'George Shortridge, just stop this nonsense. Wallowell's been clear crazy and you know it,' and he promised me to put the thing off—"

"I care not one fig about the will. He can—"

"Yes, I know, but leave that to me. Now just cool off and go home, say, to-morrow—"

"Grandma, let's understand each other. Father wouldn't have me back, at present, even if I would forgive and return. There's something else. I simply can't live under the same roof with Miriam Severn. Now, don't interrupt me, please. I mean this now and forever—"

"And 'amen,' too, I suppose. She'll be over here herself in an hour or so to do what she can to straighten things out. You can stand her a few days again, can't you, and then go abroad respectably, avoiding her all you can till you marry?"

"I've not the slightest thought of marrying."

"You all say that. Now, this young man—"

"There's not one word of sentiment ever passed between us, I tell you—"

"You needn't repeat it, Kate. You never told me a lie in your life."

"Thank you."

"At the same time, child, you seem to have been

mighty active interfering in his behalf and without your father's—"

"They were all persecuting him. I'll explain it all. Just you listen, will you? Let me do the talking now. It's my turn. They wanted to crush a good man, simply because he urged some honest reforms, tried to force him to sell his little cottage, trumped up charges against him, had a bribed mayor and chief of police to trick and involve him, bought up his superior officer to—"

"Tut! Tut! Is that all?"

"All? All?"

"Yes. Why, Kitty, child, I've been through all that with your grandfather—I used to tell him it was wrong to corrupt, as we women call it, public affairs, but he went on and got worse in it till the day he died. I simply got used to it. He'd spend a small fortune to elect a rotten mayor and city council, or whatever they call it, and then when the people would try to throw them out he'd up and have the newspapers howl about the injury it was doing the town to agitate these things, stirring up the mire to make it smell farther. That's a way our men have. I was compelled to stay in it."

"And I'm stepping out of it."

"Child, you're throwing away millions."

"And keeping my self-respect."

Here a maid entered with a card, at the sight of which the blood came and went from Kate's cheeks, her eyes widened, and she was in visible agitation.

"Who is it?" asked the grandmother.

"Ask him—ask him to come in," said Kate to the maid and, wholly forgetting the old lady, she hurried

to a mirror, she touched her hair, she glanced hastily at her gown. It was John Richardson who entered, a picture of dignity and sorrow. He had but a few hours before laid his brother in the grave.

"This is my grandmother, Mr. Richardson."

"Glad to meet you," said the old dame, eyeing him curiously. "Pleasant day!"

"Exceedingly, madam. I am—am glad to find Miss Severn here."

"It's very pleasant to see you," responded the grandmother.

"I learned you were here from the person who brought me this. Here, Miss Severn, is an envelope that belongs to you." He gave her back the sum with which she had bailed him. Kate did not open the envelope but laid it on a table. There was a moment's silence broken by the coming in of Aunt Emma, who was also introduced to Richardson.

"You needn't be afraid to speak out before me, young man," said Grandmother Severn. "I know what Kate did for you."

"Thank you, Mrs. Severn. And as for you, Miss Severn, the debt of gratit—"

"Now, that's all right, Mr. Richardson," interposed the old lady. "Don't mention it a bit." Kate, quite unable to say anything, had sunk into the corner of a sofa.

"I can't do more than mention it to-day." His voice trembled.

"Yes," said Kate sympathetically, "we have read of what has happened."

"I did not know until this hour, Miss Severn, that

I owed this immense assistance to you. The money, you know, Mrs. Severn, was delivered by an unknown man into my hands while I was under arrest. He hurried away, leaving no address, no explanation. To-day the proceedings against me were dismissed and the money handed back by the court. Later the man reappeared. He told me he had seen the newspaper report of my getting the refund and that he was to carry the money back where it came from. I suppose the honest fellow was really anxious to let me know who had done all this for me."

Kate remained silent, much agitated and struggling to be calm between her pleasure at his presence and her uncertainty as to what was next to happen.

"Of course," resumed John, "I kept at him until he satisfied my curiosity about my benefactor. Then he told me, as he knew from your maid, where you were. I was never so surprised in my life. I thought you on your way to Europe. I told him I wished to deliver this back in person so I could make some attempt to thank you. It's a blessing to know—"

Here the maid came in, followed by Mrs. Wallowell Severn, whose presence naturally threw constraint on everybody. Kate bowed coolly, Aunt Emma frigidly.

"Ah, grandmother! and you, Kate—"

"This is Mr. Richardson, Mrs. Severn," said Grandmother Severn.

"Delighted to meet you, I'm sure," said the lady, but without warmth.

"I don't mean to interrupt you all, dear—"

"Not at all, Mrs. Severn," said Kate, offering her

a chair beside John's, who in turn offering his, the great lady, unable to lower her pride sufficiently, rather stiffly acknowledged his courtesy.

"I am going now," he said. "You'll excuse me, ladies, please."

"Very sorry!" said the grandmother.

"Good day, all." Then he hesitated. "There is one thing," he began as he approached the door, "that I wish to add. This—this young lady, Miss Severn here, has done me the greatest service I can ever receive in life from anybody." Again he paused. "She did it solely from friendship to me and a sense of justice, but I know that that, together with her acquaintance with me, has been the cause of a total estrangement from her father."

Nobody could interrupt him and, a picture of sweet, manly dignity, he resumed:

"If you knew me better, all of you, I'm sure you would understand how much it pains me to have gotten all the benefits of her action myself, while she has received all the ill consequences of it and is to-day in this cruel situation. I can't—I can't be the instrument of separating her from her home. There is only one thing I can say. That Miss Severn entertains for me a particle of feeling beyond the simplest friendship, I have not the faintest hope, the faintest reason to believe. Now, I have sold my home next to Mr. Severn's and that will, I hope, relieve a situation unfair to her, since her father has taken this stand."

Here he paused, for his voice was trembling with the emotions of love, profound gratitude, and present grief.

"Good-by, Miss Severn."

"Good-by," she replied, unable to look up.

He moved toward the door but, turning at the threshold, added:

"Expecting as I do to save this lady from further pain or trouble by never seeing her again, I can at least try to make her feel the depth of my gratitude. I say to you all and would be glad to have the whole world know, speaking from the depth of my heart, that—that—"

Here his voice beginning to fail him and his self-command nearly lost, he bowed abruptly and was gone. All were more or less affected and there was an uncomfortable silence.

"I never saw a man more touched," at length remarked Mrs. Severn senior.

"Nor I," said Aunt Emma.

"A nice, clean young fellow, manly," grandmother added.

"Quite so," said Mrs. Wallowell Severn.

"Indeed he is!" Aunt Emma added. "Anybody could be proud of him."

Mrs. Wallowell Severn inclined her head, and Kate saying nothing, the grandmother began again.

"I'm going now. You two ought to have a good talk, you and Miriam, Kate. I'll only say that we've just got to arrange Kate's going back home a few days and then to Europe, but you two talk it over now and both be sensible for the family peace."

She kissed her daughter-in-law politely and Kate heartily, after which she went out with cheery comments on the weather. Aunt Emma, who had been as little aware of Mrs. Wallowell Severn's presence

as possible, bowed coldly to the latter and retired also, accompanying the grandmother to the outer hall.

"It's beautiful weather," said the stepmother.

"Quite pleasant."

"I did so enjoy the drive over here."

"Yes."

"The brisk air—the changing leaves—"

"Mrs. Severn," Kate began, "I think you and I can drop all hypocrisy about the weather and the like. As men say, we can get down to business."

"Yes?"

"Yes. I don't like you and you don't like me—"

"Now, Kate, all that rumpus—I'm so sorry—"

"No, you're not sorry. You're just trying to be sorry."

"Thank you—at least trying, then."

"I'll grant you that, but really sorry you couldn't be. It isn't in that cold, worldly heart of yours. Even when that man stood before us here, the very picture of—well, when Aunt Emma and grandmother had tears in their eyes, you, you had no more feeling—no more—"

"Dear Kate, I admit it—I admit it. It's the unfortunate rearing I've had. I've deplored it all my life. Nothing but cold, aristocratic pride in my mother's house. The plain people we were taught to despise from childhood, always to exclude, be unconscious of, everyone not born in our class—"

"Your class!" cried Kate, rising in anger. "Your class! Are we never to hear the end of this shoddy talk? Your class! Why, woman, we've laughed in our sleeves among us that your grandfathers on both sides were emigrant puddlers in the mills here, just the

plainest, the most ignorant emigrants; your father worked in the shop his own father scraped the money to build, working beside his own workmen. Your class! That part of it is good but you're ashamed of it because it was just common and honest."

Mrs. Severn flushed in anger, but she was in no position to defy the other.

"Your mother was the daughter of a penniless adventurer who always lived beyond his means, and you hadn't a dollar until you married father. Always talking about old family, old family, you Robinsons! Oh, I'm sick of this American talk about family when we're all only a generation or two out of overalls. Your class! You have no class except what our money gave you. And you talk condescendingly of John Richardson! Why, you never had an ancestor with the fiftieth part of that man's education! Leave me! Leave me! We've settled our accounts, you and I. I took pity on you when you needed it—and even now I'll make you a present of your reputation!"

During the increasing vehemence of this outburst, Mrs. Severn was slowly backing toward the door into the hall, pale and unable to face the blazing eyes of honest rage, until as the last words were uttered, she threw open the outer door and descended hastily into the garden.

"I've been listening to every word of it!" exclaimed Aunt Emma, reappearing from the back parlor. "Perfectly splendid! What's that about her reputation?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter, Aunt Emma—a flirtation—"

"I thought so an—"

"No, I can't tell you—not now, anyway."

"Oh, I fancy I know all about it—I don't go about with my eyes shut. But you handled her magnificently, the common thing! I couldn't have done it better myself. Sit down, child! Stop pacing up and down the room this way."

"Did grandmother have anything to say, as she left you at the front door, about him?"

"Why, yes, something. Sit down."

"What was it?"

"Well, I suppose I shouldn't tell you, but—why can't you keep still?—she said that when she was your age she'd have had that man if she'd had to break her neck and—"

"Bless her! Bless her heart!"

"—and she was sorry, but now she's older she thought differently. They lose one your family and they don't make you certain of a good husband. There's too much lottery in marriage for the exchange."

"There you are, one and all of you! All against me! Sit down? How can I sit down? Stop motioning to me. You're all worldly, every one of you. You've driven him away, the best man in the world. Oh, if he were a duke or worth twenty millions, what a fine judgment you'd say I had! Lottery? Oh, yes, take the chances then. But there he was standing in that door full of what's better than riches, full of honor and generosity and courage and a self-sacrificing heart and—and you've driven him away, driven—"

"Mr. Richardson, if you please, ma'am," said a maid suddenly entering, Richardson at her very heels. The three stood a moment confused. Nobody knew

what to say, while he glanced at Kate and then at her aunt, whom, it was clear, he found in the way. Pale from sorrow and sleepless nights, he looked as Leopardi might have conceived dejection.

"I came back to speak—"

Kate's heart stood still.

"Sit down, Mr. Richardson," said Aunt Emma.

"Thank you," but he remained standing.

"Oh, you wished to see Miss Kate privately?"

"If—if you please—"

"Very well!" and with that Aunt Emma left the room.

Again there was a pause that seemed an hour.

"Miss Severn, I—I've come back for just a word or two. You don't seem to—"

"I'm—I'm so surprised. Yes—there, there's a chair—"

"Thank you, I—"

"I'll sit here."

"Miss Severn, I can't keep back longer what I feel. I don't want to keep it back. I stood outside there—I paced up and down the square, but I couldn't go away for good without telling you what's in my heart, and when I saw your grandmother and Mrs. Severn leave the house, I—I came back."

Kate, utterly unable to say a word, twisted in silence the tassels of a pillow.

"It isn't that I expect you to care for me. I know you care nothing for me except as a friend that your generous heart has wanted to assist. I know it. Your silence now tells me that and why should I ask for more? What could I ever give you in exchange for luxury and beauty? Oh, I've a thousand times

resolved to stifle this feeling, this—but how could I when every day you forced me to—to love you, love you more and more?”

Though she longed to throw herself in his arms, she was so overcome with the joy that was suddenly following excitement and misery that she could simply tear off bits of the tassels and fling the tatters one by one on the floor.

“Even if you had cared for me, how could I have asked a friend, that had given up so much, to give up all the rest, to fling aside a home, to fling aside enormous riches, to fling aside the companions of a lifetime? I used to try to see the picture of our lot together, but what could my hard experience remind me of but our passing some night, maybe, your father’s great home where you would see the lights shining from every window and none for you—joy and wealth within and Kate forgotten or despised? Would it be fair in me to place you in that position? Wouldn’t it be selfish, I would say. So I tried to crush it all out, and even that I loved you I was willing to conceal, but this last act of yours, this—”

“I’m so excited!—I—I—oh, don’t argue that way!” she cried at last.

“I wanted only to tell you that I love you from the bottom of my heart and then leave you, but not before. I wanted you to have that evidence of my gratitude all your life. It was all that I could give—all I could offer after causing you to be driven from your father’s roof.”

“You? No, I. It’s I that left my father’s roof—it had to come. It wasn’t in me to live that life. I

was beginning to see through it all, to outgrow it. And then I saw you!"

"Oh, Kate, Kate!"

"Hush! I thought it was Aunt Emma! I'm so nerv—excited! How good your hand feels! Home! You speak of gay lights in the windows and all that—who knows better than I what's going on behind them—gambling, gossip, scandal, and cruel love of money. Home! I don't know, haven't known for years, what one day means that passed without a sneer or quarrel beneath that roof. Oh, why can't I stop these hands of yours! Home! Why, John, I couldn't stay there! Had you not come into my life, I had before me only some cold fashionable marriage—"

"Don't speak of it, Kate!"

"—like Clara Hillman and a dozen others, or one that, if it begins in love, ends in the squabbles and gossip that always follow marriage where there's too much money and nothing to do. I wanted and I've got a man! Let me talk—let me!—My money! Why, the only, only pang the loss of it gives me is that I couldn't give it all to you! Oh, how I used to imagine myself coming home to your home and mine, our home—in the evening with my arms full of bundles, rich things for your mother! That's all I wanted money for. But let that go. What I want now is peace."

"Peace with me! Oh, I'm sure of that but I have so little to—"

"Little! You? It's I that can bring you so little. Think of bringing a man like you only myself! And you, why, a man like you can make all the money he

wants. Of course he can! I could with the tenth part of a mind like yours. All the great lawyers began poor, they say. Now, stop worrying about me."

"Was there ever such a girl! But money—"

"Money, money, money! This country's money mad."

"Yes, money mad, Kate—"

"Why, in our house I never heard anything else talked of. As for men that had written great books or done famous things, they were always sneered at or pitied because they had no bank accounts. Surely there's something else to live for."

"There is, and remember that when you accept me, you cast your lot with a man who does not know how to make money as an object in life—"

"But you'll make them all proud of you, just the same, John. We'll show them!"

"Make some people proud of me, I hope, but not all in a country where thus far dignity and honor have belonged to money. However, the age is changing from individualism—"

"What's individ—"

"A doctrine that it's none of the government's business how much profit anybody makes out of the public. We are coming now to a modified socialism where the talents of young men will go into public affairs. Public place will become an honor—"

"And you'll be at the top. Money! I've got some myself, a pittance, they'd call it at home, but if we have to spend that—"

"Tut, tut!"

"—we'll spend it until you have time to show them what a brain you have. If people think there's hap-

piness in money, let them be born to it and see for themselves. All my father and his friends do is to worry about their property, their property, their property. Every time the public coughs or sneezes they're trembling about the effect on business, never planning to save people's lives or health, but wondering whether some new law will affect their property."

"There never was a law of property so sacred as a law of life."

"That's what I say, too—oh, John, how strong you are! Your muscles are like iron."

EPILOGUE

“WAITER, another whiskey—the same kind. No, not the Kentucky—the Scotch. The way our club is managed is an outrage, Dick. The Duquesne Club’s got more millionaires than any other in this country and nothing but a lot of farmers to run it.”

“I see this evening sheet makes a nasty thrust at Shortridge as usual.”

“So? Let’s look at it.”

“Mr. George Shortridge being asked whether any credence should be given to his reported engagement to Mrs. Wallowell Severn begged that such topics be considered matters for purely private discussion. He had, he said, no other intention than as executor to confine his attention to the great properties confided to his charge by the deceased multi-millionaire.

“Regarding the tariff he was clear that American laborers thoroughly understood that capital was their best friend against the pauper labor of Europe. Any reduction that was meditated in the duties on steel would take into consideration the cost of fighting strikes and consequent expenses.

“As to workmen’s compensation acts, he felt

the public would be slow to impose these burdens on the American steel manufacturers in competition with foreign producers, but when he was reminded that the foreign producers had long been carrying that burden too and successfully, he suddenly became very much interested in his finger-nails."

"An envious, discontented sheet."

"Anarchistic. I wonder how that girl Kate likes it now, cut off without a dollar."

"They say she's happy enough with that Richardson."

"Happy be damned! And losing millions! Impossible!"

"She treated her father cursed shabbily."

"Scandalously. Her man's doing well, they tell me, getting a good practice. But then, he'll never have any fortune to speak of, always fooling his time away with reform statutes and all that."

"Never. And she'll get just what she deserves for bailing out a man her father had gotten locked up. I suppose the old man had no legal grounds to jail the fellow on, but that was his affair, not hers. If he chose to keep him in jail, no matter why, a good daughter ought to have helped a father or at least kept her hands off. Dobbins, my automobile, please, and be quick about it. The men about this club are not fit for cattle yards."

"Another Scotch? Yes. And that fellow Richardson, as I say, will never have anything. Reforming things!"

"No, you can't make that kind of people business men!"

"And always meddling with us! We don't bother them, I notice. All we want is to be let alone."

THE END

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

ADVENTURES OF A NICE YOUNG MAN

\$1.50 POSTPAID

Some three years ago there was produced by an unknown author, styling himself "Aix," a novel which instantly caught the attention of the literary public. "The Adventures of a Nice Young Man" was a story of adventure in social and business circles of the twentieth century related in the style of Fielding and Goldsmith. To literary people the question was, how can the author have learned American business details so well unless he has passed his life in an office, but if he has passed his life in an office, how did he acquire, or how could he keep that style? The authorship of the book still remains a secret.

"Whoever 'Aix' may be, he writes with distinction."

—*Times (London)*.

"In its whimsical precision of diction, play of delicate irony . . . is suggestive of a style now seldom met with. . . . Not the least important charm . . . the treatment of ultra-modern matters in a deliberately classical manner."

—*Glasgow Herald*.

"The anonymity of this book really piques curiosity. . . . It possesses exceptional qualities of style and temper. . . . The success with which 'Aix' has laid off the new literary man and put on the old is remarkable."

—*The Nation (N. Y.)*.

"The sensation which this novel has created is natural and not by any means unworthy. . . . It is soon perceived that what we have here is not an essay to recreate the atmosphere of a century and a half ago, but a bolder and more striking attempt to carry over into the novel-writing of the present time the methods of the time of Fielding. . . . 'Aix' has vindicated that method. . . . Beyond all doubt 'Aix' should write another tale in the same manner."

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"By all odds one of the cleverest bits of work in a long while."

—*Chicago Evening Post*.

"Entirely too satisfactory a novel to be published anonymously."

—*Evening Wisconsin*.

"A book like this is sufficient to make the reputation of an author."

—*Toronto Globe*.

"An unusually fine style, a delicate choice of words."

—*Boston Globe*.